MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION
SUBVERSION
CYBERPUNK FANTASY IN NEO BABYLON
CORE RULEBOOK

Credits

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Prologue

"The world has always been troubled, but now new technology mixes with old magic to make a society run amok. The powerful use them to create empires of wealth and dominance, bleeding the rest of the world dry. Troubled has given way to afflicted. Though it may be difficult and dangerous, resistance is the only sensible response to such a world."
— Sermon of Sander Greystar, street-prophet

Neo Babylon: the year 450 by Neo Babylonian Reckoning.

It's a city of dreams and darkness, hope and despair. A city of endless potential—a city where the newest breakthroughs of technology rest among the greatest wonders of magic—a city where everything is possible.

Most everyone comes to Neo Babylon with hope—hope for a new job, to learn new things, or to change the world. Few hold on to that hope. Most in Neo Babylon find themselves overworked at jobs that pay just enough to break even and avoid the debts that would send them to toil in the purgatorium or banish them to the Undercity. Knowledge is gated by those with power, doled out only to those who agree to serve their ends.

For as much as the world is changing, and indeed it is, as radical advances in cybertechnology threaten to end the millennia old hegemony of Neo Babylon's mages. It's unclear whether it's changing for the better. Promises of a more equal world have rung hollow though, as corporations vie for economic control, leaving a precarious world where the only semblance of economic security comes from agreeing to fuel their all-consuming growth.

Still, not everyone has lost hope. The more some communities are torn down, the tighter others cling together. Communities, ranging from gangs to political groups to tight-knit neighborhoods looking to better their lives, all look to each other and inside themselves to figure out a better path forward. For all that seems dark, there's a real hope that maybe things could be better, as long as they're willing to fight for it.

From the bottom to the top, folk are finding new ways to subvert old values, new language to tell old stories, and taking back control of their lives.

Will you take up the call of your community to try and make things better? Will you sell out your principles if it means saving your friends? Sell out your friends to change the world?

BABYLON: FROM OLD TO NEW

The Past

2,650 years ago, The Babylonian Empire, under the control of Nebuchadnezzar II, unlocked the secrets of arcane magic. Trained battle mages flew above the battlefield, batting aside arrows and unleashing fire and lightning onto Nebuchadnezzar's rivals, conquering everything in the fertile crescent and beyond, taking everything, including resources, expressions of magic, culture, and technologies, for himself and for Babylon.

The Babylonian Empire was a uniquely powerful and influential empire that held sway over the world for over a thousand years in ways no civilization has since. Its magical wonders were the envy of the rest of the world. Its imperial ambitions were checked only by its size and desire to tightly control its domain.

Suddenly, 1,200 years after it began, Babylon's supremacy came to an unexpected end. A world-shaking, catastrophic event known as the Shattering sank the entire fertile crescent into the ocean. As a result, Babylonians (with their culture and knowledge) were forced to scatter all over the world.

Despite Babylon sinking beneath the waves with many of its secrets, its legend lived on. A thousand years after the Shattering, a diverse group of Babylonian descendants and like-minded individuals, entranced by the tales of Babylon of old and a desire to recreate its arcane might, came together to create the city of Neo Babylon on the newly discovered continent of Azore, in the Atlantic Ocean. Ruled by a council of 60 mages known as the Ukkim, Neo Babylon slowly but surely set out to restore the influence of old Babylon.

The Present

The vast city sprawl of Neo Babylon stands alone as the largest, wealthiest, and most influential city

there has ever been, and its power seems to only grow every day. Fueled originally by rediscovered arcane power, Neo Babylon has existed as a society stratified between those with magical talent (and thus wealth and power) and those without.

New advances in technology threaten to overturn that order. Corporations tout new "cybertech" to provide abilities to rival or surpass even the most impressive arcane feats—at a cost. These upstarts fight with the ossified arcane elite for resources, money, and power—discarding those with none into Neo Babylon's flooding undercity.

Even as society remakes itself at a seemingly ever increasing pace, it's hard for many to see how the world is changing for the better. Powerful mages use their abilities to preserve their privileged position over the masses, while corporations exploit their labor, each one hoping to seize more and more economic power. Roiling beneath their fight, an uncaring system promises a bare sliver of economic security to those who meet its expectations while seeming to erode any ties or institutions that provide stability without it. The cybernet floods every waking moment with distractions and balms, blunting the ills of modern society while urging the viewer to work ever harder to power that very same society.

The Future

For some though, the fact that the world is changing at all is proof that a better world is possible: a world where community matters more than control, and personhood matters more than power. These visionaries seek to convince others of a better world worth fighting for, with protectors defending the weak against corrupt systems and neighbors making a better society one block at a time.

Not so long ago, those fighting for a better world won their most visible victory: The Great Strike. The workers of Neo Babylon stood up to the powers that be in a way that threatened to grind it all to a halt, demanding a greater voice and greater share of the wealth they produced. The Ukkim sought to diffuse their demands with a token concession, enabling communities to designate Envoys to voice their grievances. These Envoys were meant to be figureheads, go-betweens from the workers to the government, to reduce tension and blow off steam while the elites found a way to stall with charm, promises, and half-measures.

Disillusioned, some Envoys began taking matters into their own hands. Rather than asking for help that never came, Envoys began solving community problems themselves. When one group couldn't solve their problems, they asked others for help, and the call was quickly answered. Envoys quickly morphed from petitioners to problem solvers, uniting communities in solidarity, mutual aid, and direct action.

Most in power consider the Envoys' turn towards mutual aid and direct action as a flash in the pan, something that will dissolve in the face of the economic realities of corporate power and the world they offer. For others though, a better world seems to be riding on their continued success...

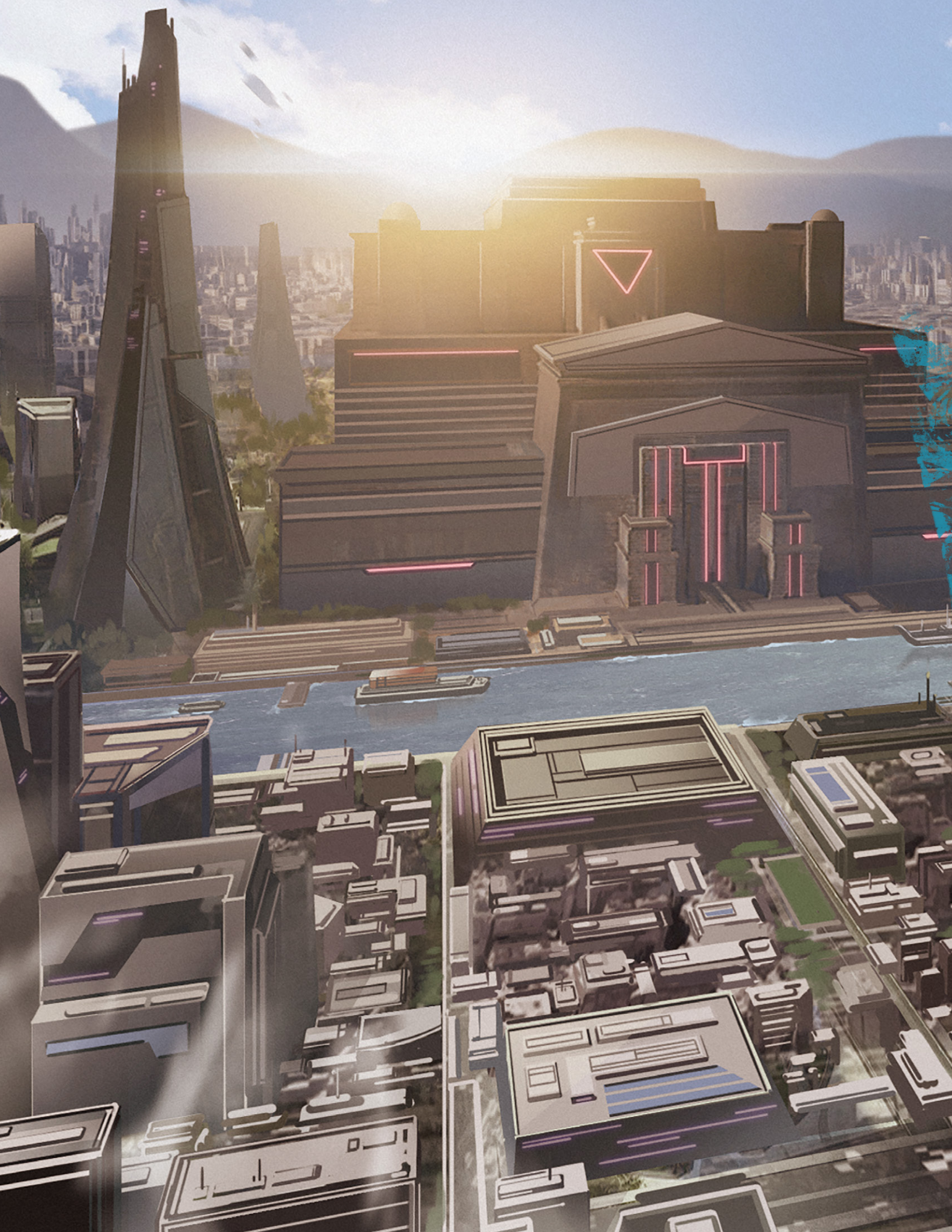
How to Use This Book

This book is divided into seven parts, each covering different material that may be of different use to different players:

- Core Rules (pg 11) covers the basic mechanics of the game. We encourage everyone to read through this part of the rules to understand how the game works.
- Extended Rules (pg 41) covers in-depth rules for specific types of scenes, including social interactions, combat, breaching, and magic. We encourage players to read through the parts of this section relevant to their character's special abilities and role in the party.
- Character CreatioN (pg 71) covers the process of creating a Community and Character.
- The World of Neo Babylon (pg 195) provides lore details about the world of Neo Babylon.
- GM (pg 245) provides additional rules, details, and advice for the GM.
- Sappir (pg 279) provides a sample community and characters, as well as a premade adventure that new players can use.
- Appendices and References (pg 319) provides glossaries, indexes, and change notes for the rules.

Learning to Play

If you are the GM, or are introducing Subversion to a group of friends, we encourage you to read the book all the way through. You won't remember everything, and that's fine. The book in your hands serves as a reference document. In fact, it serves three purposes: rules, inspiration, and reference. Your first time reading, focus on being inspired and let the rules wash over you, remembering what you can. The next time you read them, the rules will make much more sense. Each time you play, and each time you look something up, you'll get that much more familiar with the rules.



PART I
CORE RULES

The Basics

WHAT IS SUBVERSION?

In Subversion, you tell a story about a group of Envoys; talented individuals promoting, protecting, and achieving the goals of their community while they pursue their own values, desires, and aspirations. Arrayed against the Envoys are a multitude of forces in the cyberpunk-fantasy streets of Neo Babylon, seemingly arrayed to grind the Envoys down, or at least into accepting an increasingly bleak status quo. Armed with cybernetics, magic, faith, skills, and most importantly, community, Envoys resist the domineering forces of an exploitive and authoritative system and try to build something better in its place—or they'll be broken trying.

Play Subversion to discover the fate of your community and friends as they navigate the dangers of greedy corporations, malevolent demons, rival factions, corrupt Lawjacks, and your biggest fear: becoming just like them.

HOW DO I PLAY?

Subversion is a tabletop role playing game (TTRPG), a game where players use their imaginations and the game rules to tell a story. Players take the roles of protagonists in the story, while one person takes the role of game moderator (GM) to build out the setting, secondary characters, and antagonists—and together everyone works to make an interesting, compelling, and above all else, fun story. The rules let players know what is possible, help ensure that no one character outshines the others, provide a foundation of understanding so everyone is on the same page, and facilitate the ultimate goal to have fun telling a good story.

PLAYERS

Each player creates a character (as well as the people they know and the community around them) and takes the role of that character in a collectively told story. They bring their characters to life as complex people striving bravely to bring a better world into existence, kicking and screaming. Players' main responsibility is to interact with the scenario and with the other characters in a way that creates a rich, interesting, and above all, enjoyable story for all involved.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

A character created by a player is called a **Player Character**, or **PC**. PCs are Envoys, individuals selected by their community to serve as agents, defenders, ambassadors, and problem solvers opposed to the larger, impersonal forces that form the world's system of domination.

Stories in Subversion are driven forward by characters' beliefs, desires, needs, and circumstances, or those of their community. As these motivations conflict with each other or the larger world, characters work to refine what it is they believe in, what they're willing to do, and what their relationship is to their community. In the stories the players tell together, the PCs are the main characters.

COMMUNITIES

Together, the group of Players and the GM create the **community** that the PCs belong to. Communities are filled with dramatic personalities, helpful resources, familiar places, and the hopes and dreams of the PCs. Communities act as a backdrop and a home base, both leading, and being led by, the PCs. As play continues, communities grow alongside characters and become characters in and of themselves.

Envoys and Other Stories

The default role that characters play in Subversion is that of Envoys working on behalf of their communities in Neo Babylon. These are only defaults, however—Subversion's rules and setting are broad enough to allow many different kinds of adventures and stories, so one could easily imagine the PCs, instead of being Envoys, being a group of thieves, a band of mercenaries, or explorers from a far-off place. Usually this is just a simple narrative substitution, but in places where the rules assume the characters are envoys, we'll offer other options in a sidebar like this. In any case, feel free to change, ignore, or re-flavor any rules to tell the story you're excited about telling!

GAME MODERATORS

A **Game Moderator**, or **GM**, narrates the antagonists, minor characters, and every other supporting role that helps tell the story. They shape the settings, chart out plots, place PCs in various confrontational situations, and handle the background of the stories, unfolding them as they see fit. The GM could use an Episode book from Fragging Unicorns, like **The Death of Lawmaster Finn** Episode available online at FraggingUnicorns.com, or they could create a completely new story from scratch.

A character created and played by the GM is called a **Non-Player Character**, or **NPC**. Together, the GM and players perform a narrative give-and-take, each building off the responses and descriptions the other gives, and in this way, tell a collaborative story together with their PCs and NPCs.

Rhythm of Play

Subversion's game play is structured around three modes of play: Action, Downtime, and Reflection. **Action** is where most of the exciting stuff happens, either in **Dramatic Time**, where players interact with the world in a free-form way, or in **Cinematic Time**, where characters alternate actions, and time is closely tracked. In Action, characters confront problems and adversaries. Action is where most of the narratively important events happen, and where the characters encounter the most pushback and risk.

Downtime covers the interludes between action as characters live their lives and interact with their communities. Players can use Downtime to heal, gain new abilities, or help build up the people and places around them. The GM can use systems of debt, factions, and Grit to create new plot hooks for the PCs and community-facing stories can be narrated.

Reflection is a non-narrative mode that happens at the end of each session. This time allows the players to reflect on the actions of their characters, and is where the GM gives out Fortune rewards and the group tracks any long-term changes in goals, values, relationships, or their community.

Gameplay Inspirations

These are some games that have inspired the creation of Subversion. They were designs we compared our work to as we made it, innovations that gave us new ideas, and touchpoints we use to talk to new people about what they might expect from our game.

- *Ancestry & Culture*, by Eugene Marshall
- *Blades in the Dark*, by John Harper
- *The Bloody Handed Name of Bronze*, by Joshua A. C. Newman
- *The Burning Wheel*, by Luke Crane
- *Earthdawn*, by FASA Games
- *Eclipse Phase*, by Posthuman Studios
- *Hard Wired Island*, by Weird Age Games
- *Hillfolk*, by Robin D. Laws
- *Misspent Youth*, by Robert Bohl
- *Shadow of the Demon Lord*, by Robert J. Schwalb
- *Shadowrun*, by FASA, Catalyst Game Labs

Thematic Inspirations

- The technology of *Neuromancer*
- The sacrifice of *The Hunger Games*
- The magic of *The Magicians*
- The rebellion of *Star Wars*
- The truth telling of *The Boondocks*
- The community of *The Goonies*
- The heart of *Avatar the Last Airbender*

What You Need

To play Subversion, you need:

- 10-20 six-sided dice (or a dice-rolling app)
- At least one character sheet per person
- This book for reference

We also recommend you grab some way of making notes and drawings, and (especially if you're playing in person), snacks, pizza, munchies, drinks, and whatever else puts you at ease.

What To Ignore

This game is designed for two things. 1) Friends having fun together, and 2) telling great stories about hopeful resistance to injustice. If, along the way, you find anything in these pages that hinders those two goals, talk about it with your friends and ignore, add, change, improve, or paint over anything that will get you back to fun, friends, hope, and resistance.

THE GAME SYSTEM

The rules in Subversion are a way to give fairness, common language, and a bit of randomness to the stories told as part of the game. Playing Subversion is ultimately about telling stories, and in many cases the story can be told without referring to the rules, particularly when describing and interacting with the world and its many inhabitants and the planned tasks are well within the abilities of the characters. When the stakes are higher and success becomes less assured (such as during important negotiations, daring escapes, combat, attempting a death-defying stunt, and the like) the rules exist to provide narrative tension.

GMs and players should use their best judgment as to when dice need to be rolled, but a good rule of thumb is to **use dice whenever the result of failure or success would be dramatic**.

Rolling Dice

In Subversion, dramatic results are often decided by rolling dice, what we call a **Test**. When making a Test, roll three or more six-sided dice (henceforth referred to as D6s), and keep the three highest of those dice. Add the three kept dice together and that is the result of the roll. That result is then compared to a Target Number, or TN, set by the GM:

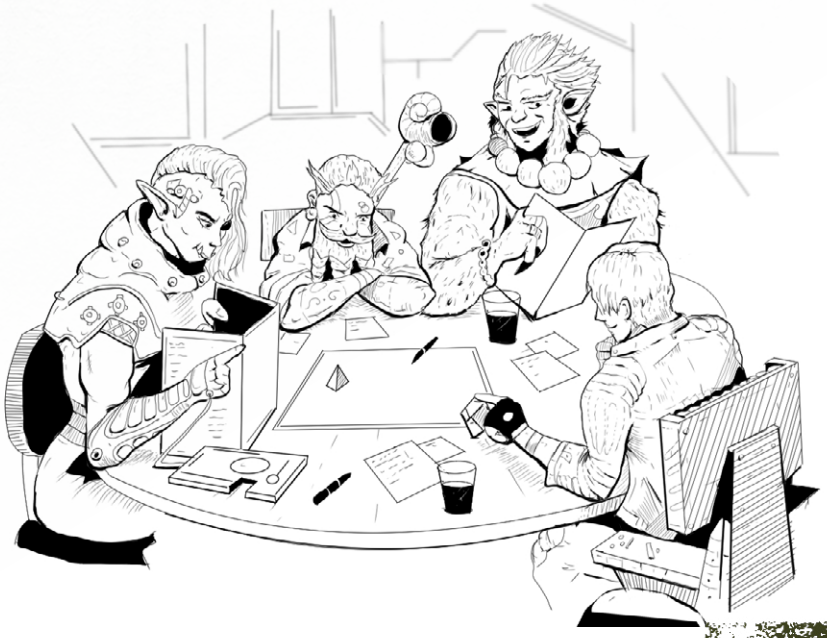
- If you roll equal to or up to 4 above the TN, that's a Success—you accomplish your goal or make progress towards it.
- If you roll 5 or more above the TN, it's a Dynamic Success—well done! You've solidly achieved your goal, or made even more progress.
- If each kept dice is a 6, the roll is a Critical Success! You've fantastically progressed or achieved your goal, even if you miss the TN.
- If you miss the TN by 1-4, that's a Failure. You don't accomplish your goal or make any progress, and frequently suffer some minor complication.
- If you roll 5 or more below the TN, that is a Dynamic Failure. Not only did you fail to accomplish your goal, but you brought further complications onto yourself.

By default, you roll 3 dice in a skill, though many abilities provide additional dice (most commonly being trained in a skill—characters roll a number of additional dice equal to their level in a skill). Characters always roll at least three dice on a Test: if they would roll less than 3 dice, they gain an instance of the **Dulled** condition for that roll (see pg 18) for each dice they would roll below 3.

Each skill also has a linked attribute. Attributes have a rank of 0-7. When making a skill Test you add the attribute rank as a flat bonus to the roll.

Ex. Shannor has 1 rank in their Melee Combat skill and 3 ranks in Agility (melee combat's linked attribute). They roll 4d6 (3 base plus one from skill), with a result of 3,4,5, and 5. They would take the highest three (4,5, and 5), add those up (14) and add their Agility rank as a bonus (3) for a total of 17.

Most dice rolls in Subversion are variations of this basic roll. When in doubt, pick an appropriate skill, set a TN, compare the result, and go on with your story!



TN	Description	Examples
8	Easy. A task even a novice is likely to succeed at.	Driving a car in heavy rain
10	Average. A task a trained character is likely to succeed at with effort.	Driving a car in a blizzard
12	Difficult. A task a nonspecialist is likely to struggle with.	Driving through an obstacle course at speed
14	Challenging. A task with substantial failure rate even among modestly trained individuals.	Performing a flip on a motorcycle as part of an obstacle course
16	Punishing. A task pushing the limits of even skilled practitioners.	Performing a flip off a jump in a crowded area you've never gone through before
18	Heroic. A task achievable by only the most able characters.	Landing a motorcycle jump onto a moving vehicle that's not coordinating with you
20	Legendary. A task that requires skill, innate ability, and luck to succeed.	Intercepting another motorcycle mid-jump and knocking them off course
22	Epic. A task only accomplishable by the most skilled and able with any regularity	Intercepting another motorcycle mid jump, knocking the other driver off, switching motorcycles, and sticking the landing
25	Nigh Impossible. A task only attemptable by the most skilled, and even then likely to fail.	Piloting a damaged VTOL at ground level through a city at night during a major hurricane

ATTRIBUTES

Subversion has 6 **Attributes** that represent your broad abilities across a number of domains. Attributes can range from Rank 0 (average for a person) to 7 (amazing). Attributes provide a bonus to skill tests equal to the attribute Rank. The six attributes are:

- **Brawn (BRW):** physical strength and toughness.
- **Agility (AGI):** reflexes and quickness.
- **Wit (WIT):** education, street smarts, and quick or critical thinking.
- **Awareness (AWA):** paying attention, observing, and processing the world around you.
- **Will (WIL):** the self-control to resist dominance, exert agency, and restrain impulses.
- **Charisma (CHA):** persuasiveness, attractiveness, and ability to socially affect the world.

In addition to their role in skill tests, attributes also affect a character's starting values in special attributes called Guard, Vigilance, Aegis, Health, Animity, and Grit. These special attributes have their own rules and are discussed in further detail below.

SKILLS

Skills represent the training and aptitude the character has in a particular domain. When rolling dice in Subversion, skill ranks tell you the number of additional dice you will roll to use that skill. Characters trained in a skill start at Rank 0 in a skill (indicating that they make tests with the skill with no penalties or additional dice), though skilled practitioners can get up to Rank 6 (rolling six additional dice). Additionally, each skill has an attribute that is linked to it, indicating what attribute is most likely to be called upon when using that skill. Using a skill Untrained gives 2 instances of Dulled on that Test. The 12 skills are:

ARTS

Linked Attribute: Charisma

Arts broadly covers the expressive and artistic endeavors of a person. Ranging from acting to painting, singing to dancing, and everything in between and adjacent, Arts is what you use to create something expressive and meaningful.

DECEPTION

Linked Attribute: Charisma

Deception covers lying, misdirection, forgeries and manipulation—essentially any case where you're trying to convince someone something is true when it isn't.

HUMANITIES
Linked Attribute: Wit

Humanities cover a wide range of topics around the social sciences and people's nature. This covers a wide range of topics including History, Law, Current Events, Geography, Sociology, Literature and Journalism. When you answer questions about people or society, use Humanities.

INFLUENCE
Linked Attribute: Charisma

Influence covers negotiation, persuasion, intimidation, and leadership. Influence uses win-win tactics, speaks honorably and straightforwardly, uses rhetoric that leads, but isn't manipulative. The line between Influence and Deception is sometimes thin, and the GM will make the final determination of whether your persuasive techniques cross over to Deception - propaganda is sometimes subtle and unconscious.

MAGIC ARTS
Linked Attribute: Will

Magic Arts cover anything dealing with magic. When untrained, Magic Arts is theoretical, providing information about magical effects, traditions, and creatures. When you become trained in Magic Arts, you may choose an aspect of Arcane, Sublime, or Sacred Magic. Once this choice is made, you cannot make another choice. You may only use magic and paradigms associated with that magic source.

MELEE COMBAT
Linked Attribute: Agility

Melee Combat deals with fighting in close proximity, either unarmed or wielding a melee weapon.

OBSERVATION
Linked Attributes: Awareness/Wit

Observation is the skill of learning things about the world, whether it be determining if someone is telling the truth, finding evidence, looking for food or shelter, judging what is safe or not, spotting traps, or deeply seeing the world around you. Searching and finding use Awareness while memory, pattern recognition, deduction, and analysis use Wit.

PHYSICALITY
Linked Attributes: Brawn/Agility

Physicality covers the range of physical activities the PC might perform including jumping, lifting, balancing, tumbling, swimming, and running, as well as actions like sneaking, sleight of hand, and other actions that rely on careful coordination and physical control.

Physicality in general and Athletics in particular normally rely on the Brawn Attribute while Acrobatics and Stealth usually involve the Agility Attribute.

PILOTING
Linked Attribute: Awareness

This is the skill that deals with your ability to do mundane and fancy things while piloting a vehicle or riding a creature.

RANGED COMBAT
Linked Attribute: Agility

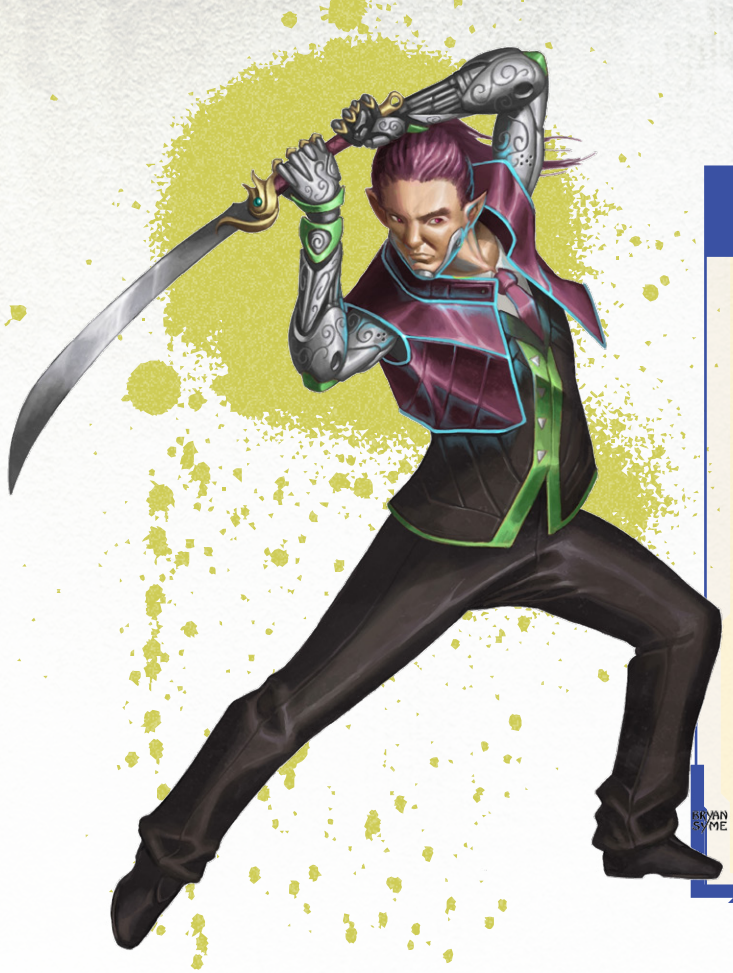
Ranged Combat is the art and science of employing ranged weapons. This covers firearms as well as more traditional weapons like bows and thrown weapons.

SCIENCES
Linked Attribute: Wit

Knowledge and practical application of sciences, this skill comprises medicine, and other natural, biological, and mechanical sciences. Any time a Test is needed to know stuff about the natural world that has been learned by experimentation and observation, this is the right choice.

TECH
Linked Attribute: Wit

Tech represents the ability to build, repair, and use technology. Without additional paradigms, tech allows characters to interact with computers and other cybertech electronics in socially acceptable, legal ways, as well as covering designing and repairing devices. Paired with certain paradigms, it facilitates Breaching (hacking cybertech, (see "Breaching" on pg 50) and the technical aspects of Jumping (remotely controlling drones and vehicles).



Changing Linked Attributes and Flexible Skill Usage

Sometimes, it may make sense to use another attribute besides the default, either because of unusual circumstances (e.g. using Wit instead of Agility to calculate a trajectory for a grappling hook launched in the dark), a plausible alternative approach (choosing between Brawn and Agility for running through a dense forest where it's plausible to either barrel through the undergrowth or duck around it) or to represent semantic knowledge about an active skill (Using Wits with Piloting to know the model of a car you just spotted).

This may sometimes lead to cases where multiple skills cover the same case—the history of art could be either a Humanities Test or a wit based Arts Test. In this case, the player can choose the approach that makes sense to them, though the GM may flavor the results (and possibly apply modifiers) based on what skill is rolled.

What The Results Mean

SUCCESS

If you roll equal to or over the Target Number, you accomplish your goal with a **Success**. For a simple Test, this means you straightforwardly accomplish what you're attempting. For more complicated tests, you make progress towards a goal or do damage, as specified by the ability.

DYNAMIC SUCCESSES

Sometimes in making a Test, you surpass the goal so decisively that you can achieve benefits beyond the default for Success. If you roll 5 or higher past a TN, it is a **Dynamic Success**. A Dynamic Success has double the progress, damage, or effect of an ordinary Success. In cases where further Success at the action has no effect, the GM should pick some other benefit to help the player.

When an ability states a specific result of a Dynamic Success, this overrides other uses of Dynamic Success.

Example: Ali is attempting to breach an electronic lock to get into a secure facility she needs some information from. She breaks out her cyberkit and rolls Tech against the Security Rating of the door, giving a TN of 11, and needs a total of 11 points of progress to breach its firewall *(see "Breaching" on pg 50)**. Ali rolls two 5s and a 4, plus 3 for her Wit, for a total of 17—more than 5 above the TN so Ali gets a Dynamic Success. Normally, Ali would do 5 points of progress toward the goal, but the Dynamic Success means she gains 10 points of progress to her goal. She's almost there!*

CRITICAL SUCCESS

If all 3 kept dice are 6s, that is a **Critical Success**. A Critical Success has triple the progress, damage, or effect of an ordinary Success. In cases where further effect on the action has no effect, the GM instead decides some other advantageous side effect to benefit the character.

In the above example, if Ali had instead rolled three 6s (for a total of 18), she would have gotten a Critical Success—and since Ali normally would gain 5 progress points, she instead gains three times as much – 15 – which means she was able to breach the door in one go.

Just like a Dynamic Success, when an ability states a specific result of a Critical Success, this overrides any of the above uses. Critical Successes replace Dynamic Successes, so no single Test can achieve both.

FAILURE

On a **Failure**, you fail to accomplish your goal in a way that causes you difficulty or problems. In Cinematics such as a chase or combat where each second counts, a Failure means the action had no effect. In situations without a time pressure, a Failure should cause a complication and worsen the situation in some way, even if it just means the attempted action is no longer available. For example:

- You are unable to use this skill again for the same goal until circumstances change.
- A Progress Track (e.g. Concealment or Regard) moves 3 points in a direction to your detriment
- The GM gains 1 Grit.
- A narratively appropriate consequence worsens the situation.

If no complication for Failure seems appropriate, and the player can keep trying until they succeed, they should be assumed to automatically succeed in any task they can accomplish.

DYNAMIC FAILURES

Sometimes, you fall short disastrously. If you roll 5 points or lower below the TN, that is a **Dynamic Failure**. On a Dynamic Failure, the GM chooses a more serious complication for Failure. Some examples:

- The character gains an instance of Dulled (see pg 18) for the remainder of the scene.
- The character takes Health or Animity damage.
- An enemy gets an opportunity to take an extra action.

For both Failures and Dynamic Failures, the GM is encouraged to be creative and do what fits the story and the moment!

Example: After Ali finishes having a few beers with his new friends, they decide to catch a ride home. Realizing they're out of cash (having spent it all buying a few rounds of drinks), they try to see if they can hitch a ride with someone else and convince them to drop them off. Because Ali's drunk, and it's a big ask of a stranger, the GM sets the TN at 18. Ali rolls 3 3s: with their Charisma of 3 that's a 12, more than 5 below the TN. The GM decides that in addition to not being able to get a ride this scene, the person Ali harassed has called the Lawjacks, and Ali has to get out of there before the Lawjacks show up!

ROLL KEYWORDS

Abilities, gear, and rules will often modify a roll by applying the following keywords. If multiple keywords apply to the same roll, the player may choose what order to apply them in.

RELIABLE (X)

Some abilities, gear, or other effects can make a roll **Reliable**. If a roll is Reliable, you may increase the value of any rolled dice to the value specified in Reliable (So Reliable 2 may count all 1s as 2s instead, Reliable 3 may count all 1s and 2s as 3s etc.)

INSPIRED

Some abilities, gear or other effects can make a roll Inspired. If a roll is **Inspired**, you may improve the result of one die by 1, to max of 6 (this can trigger a Critical Success).

DULLED

Some abilities limit the possible level of success for a skill. If an ability applies the **Dulled** trait to a roll, it reduces the highest possible value on a roll to the Dulled rating. Any dice results above the Dulled value become the value (so Dulled 5 treats all 6s as 5s, Dulled 4 treats all 5s and 6s as 4s etc.). Your first instance of Dulled gives you Dulled 5, every further instance of Dulled reduces the number by 1.

When a character is untrained (i.e. they are not Trained 0 or above) in a skill they gain two instances of Dulled. Additionally, characters gain an instance of Dulled for each consequence they have. If a character would ever roll less than 3 dice (due to penalties), they still roll 3 dice, but gain an instance of Dulled for each dice under 3 they would roll.

Dulled prevents a character from Critically Succeeding (as it reduces the sixes to fives). A character may spend Grit to ignore Dulled (see "Using and Losing Grit" on pg 25).

Balancing Success and Failure

It's hard to tell a good story by simply winning all the time. Good stories have dramatic downbeats as well, so having characters fail, be captured, lose something valuable, or make loved ones upset isn't bad! It makes for good storytelling. We encourage players to see losing as fun and a chance to tell good stories, not to treat Subversion as a game to be won.

AUGMENT (X)

A roll with **Augment** has a greater effect on a Success. Increase the amount of progress or damage done on a Success by the value of Augment. Apply Augment before resolving the effects of Dynamic or Critical Successes. Augment is often provided by gear, weapons, paradigm abilities, or specific circumstances.

RESISTANCE (X)

A roll with the **Resistance** keyword applied to it decreases the amount of progress made on a Success. Resistance is often provided by defensive abilities that make affecting a target more difficult, though it may also apply to certain challenges.

When not to Roll

Not every situation requires a Test. Most of what characters do either isn't very difficult or doesn't have narrative consequences. In these cases, no tests are necessary. PCs don't need to roll to find their keys, drive to the bar, or chat with the bartender (in most circumstances).

BASIC COMPETENCY

What characters are able to do without rolling depends on their skills—an ER doctor might find stabilizing a stab wound trivial, while a noodle shop owner might find it a tricky proposition. As a general rule, if the TN is less than 5+Skill Rating+Attribute and there is no time pressure, there is no need to Test, even if there are consequences for a Failure.

ROLLING FOR EFFECT

Sometimes, even though Failure doesn't have a consequence, it's worth noting how well someone succeeded (perhaps someone on the team has baked cookies for the rest of the team, and everyone wants to know how good they are). Roll as per normal, but the quality of the result depends on the roll.

TYPES OF TESTS

When success isn't guaranteed and failure makes a difference to the narrative, the results are adjudicated by dice rolls.

Simple Tests

The simplest challenges only require a single roll by the PCs to overcome. The GM will describe the situation, and either the PCs suggest a skill Test that may apply, or the GM will ask for a particular Test against a TN. If the PCs meet the TN on the skill Test, with or without complications, they overcome the challenge. If they fail, the GM narrates the result and the PCs may have to find another way to address the challenge or try again once something has changed.

TNs for most skills are determined by the GM, however some TNs are specified by the relevant defense of the target (Vigilance, Aegis, or Guard), or are specified as part of a rule, paradigm ability, or piece of equipment.

Opposed Tests

Sometimes you are competing against another character's action to succeed: perhaps you're trying to grab something off the table before another character, or win a debate. In this case, the TN becomes the higher number of any TN (if there's a chance that both characters fail), or the highest opponents roll.

FAILURES AND OPPOSED TESTS

Consequences for Failures (including Dynamic Failures) only occur if you don't beat the TN (or roll under the TN by 5 or more), not your opponent's roll—your opponent winning is consequence enough! Dynamic Successes, on the other hand, require beating both the base TN and your opponent's roll by 5.

Example: Alice and Casey are racing their mushkushu through the crowded undercity of Neo Babylon. The GM determines that simply navigating the course safely is difficult, setting the TN at 10. Alice rolls a 16, and Casey rolls a 12—Alice wins, though not with a Dynamic Success and Casey still finishes. If Casey instead rolled a 10, Casey would finish, but Alice would get a Dynamic Success—maybe the race wasn't close at all or her success impressed a key figure. If Casey rolled an 8, they would get a Failure—perhaps they missed a turn or had a minor accident. If they rolled a 5 or under, they would get a Dynamic Failure—perhaps the accident wasn't that minor!

CRITICAL SUCCESSES AND OPPOSED TESTS

Treat Critical successes as normal unless both participants get Critical Successes. In this case, ignore the Critical Successes, and just compare the numerical value of the tests (depending on modifiers this may lead to a normal or Dynamic Successes).

Non-Skill Tests

Sometimes, a Test may be desirable which has no specific skill linked to it. In these rare cases, players should roll 3d6 + a relevant attribute versus a TN set by the GM.

Teamwork Tests

Sometimes one character is making a Test, and another wants to help out—this is called a **Teamwork Test**. When the primary character makes a skill Test, any number of allies may roll a single dice (applying any roll keywords such as Inspired, Reliable, or Dulled as normal), and contribute it to the Test. The primary character may use the results of any die from any assisting character when determining the highest 3 dice for the results of the skill Test (none of the primary character's roll keywords may affect these dice). For every 3 additional dice a secondary character would roll above 3, they may contribute one additional die.

In Cinematics, helping a Teamwork Test costs a Main Action. In addition, all participants in the final Test, even those just helping, are likely to suffer consequences of a Failure, if any.

Example: Mari is working on figuring out what a complicated prototype does. She normally would roll 5d6+2 when using Science. Mari's allies, Nan and Octavia, decide to use teamwork to help out. Nan has Science trained at rank 0, while Octavia has it untrained. Mari rolls her 5d6, for a result of 1,2,2,3,5. Nan rolls her teamwork die (1d6) and gets a 5. Octavia rolls her teamwork die and gets a 6 (but since she is untrained, it is Dulled 4, so her 6 only counts as a 4). This means that Mari can take Nan's 5, Octavia's 4, and her own 5, and add her attribute bonus of 2, for a total of 16 – a great roll with a little help from her friends!

Group Tests

Sometimes a group needs to make a Test where the total result of the group matters. This is called a **Group Test**. In a Group Test, everyone rolls: if there are more Successes than Failures, the group succeeds, if there are more Failures than Successes, they fail. DDynamic Successes and Dynamic Failures count double, Critical Successes count triple in addition to any special effect. On a tie, the group succeeds—barely. The GM chooses one complication for Failure despite their success.

Example: Ari, Brian, Casey, and Demetrius are trying to sneak past a guard. Ari gets a Dynamic Success, and Brian gets a normal Success, but Casey rolls a Dynamic Failure and Demeterius gets a Failure. This counts as 3 Successes and 3 Failures, so the group barely succeeds, but the GM decides that Casey twisted their ankle and lost 2 Health as a result of their Dynamic Failure.

PROGRESS TRACKS

When the results of an action can't be resolved in a single roll, Subversion relies on a **Progress Track** to resolve the situation. Progress Tracks can represent the physical or mental health of a character or monster, the position of two characters in a race, the opinion of a character towards a PC, and more. Each Success or Failure moves the Progress Track closer or further from resolution, until the Progress Track is filled (or other events take precedence!)

PROGRESSING TRACKS

To progress a Track, characters make a Test. **On a Success, the character makes 5 progress on the track** (this may be modified by gear, abilities or situations). Multiply this x2 on a Dynamic Success and x3 on a Critical Success. This applies after any of your modifiers (though before any modifiers such as Armor your target may have).

TRACK LENGTH

Each Progress Track has a length, which determines how much progress must be made before it is resolved. In order to make progress on a Track, the PCs must use their skills and abilities successfully. When attempting to make progress on a Track, players choose a skill appropriate to the challenge and state what they are trying to accomplish. Certain challenges may be immune to certain skills, meaning they cannot be used to progress on those Tracks, or can only be progressed using certain skills—the GM is final arbiter on what skills apply to a Progress track.

BONUS TRACKS

In some cases, a Track may have multiple goals or different degrees of potential favorable outcomes (for example, in a Chase there may be multiple characters attempting to escape, with differing levels of success indicating how many people escape). In this case, a **Bonus Track** can be added to the Progress Track. A Bonus Track adds additional length to the Progress Track that can be filled in once the main track is complete, and provides some additional benefit if the Bonus Track is completed.

CONTESTED TRACKS

In some cases a Progress Track may be shared between two or more opposing parties. In such case, each party's actions will move the track in opposing directions (see "Concealment" on pg 46).

If both sides are actively contesting a track, progress on a **Contested Track** will rely on opposed tests rather than a simple Test. In this case, whichever side wins the Test makes progress in their preferred direction. If one side is distracted (or unaware the contest is taking place), make a simple Test instead.

DOWNTIME TRACKS

A **Downtime Track** is a specific type of Progress Track that can only be directly progressed by using the Advance Downtime Track Downtime Action (see pg 36) to narratively pursue a goal—though the GM may modify the progress on a Downtime Track based on other actions and events that relate to the goal.

When to have a Progress Track

Progress Tracks provide an opportunity to split success (or failure!) over multiple actions, and allows for other events to take place in the meantime. This allows adversaries to react to a character's actions, other problems to arise and vie for attention, and multiple narrative actions to apply to the same challenge.

Sometimes, however, there's nothing interesting happening between starting and ending a Progress Track. In these cases, Progress Tracks can just feel like a bunch of superfluous rolls. In this case, the GM is encouraged to abbreviate the Progress Track with a simple roll capturing the overall quality of work towards the goal—or just assume success and forgo rolling altogether!

When all you have is a hammer...

By default, GMs are encouraged to be permissive of what skills might contribute to a Progress Track. This enables everyone to contribute to each scene, and can often be the source of clever problem solving and interesting twists.

However, in some cases, players may attempt to use a skill not because it makes sense, but because it's what they're best at. In the extreme case, the arguments for how a skill might help are tenuous, or flat out silly. In this case, the GM should raise the TN for the task (reflecting the difficulty of succeeding), decrease the amount of progress done on a Success (reflecting how tangentially the task achieves the goal), or just disallow the skill altogether (unless a more plausible use can be proposed). On the flip side, some ideas might be particularly good or well suited to the problem—in this case the GM might decrease the TN or increase the amount of progress done on a Success.

By giving bonuses for clever and realistic approaches (and penalties for dubious ones), the GM can encourage players to act realistically and come up with ideas that seem like they should work, rather than just trying to creatively apply their best skill.

Length of Challenge	Progress Track Length	Target Encounter Length	Examples
Instant	Single Test	A simple question of whether something happens with no opportunity for anything else to interrupt.	Do the PCs know something? Do they make a good impression? Accomplishing a task with no chance of interruption.
Short	10	Players may accomplish the task in a handful of tests (possibly a single good roll), with time for a small complication to occur before they finish.	Getting into an invite only club without provoking the bouncer. Tracking down an NPC without spooking them.
Medium	20	Players attempt 4-5 actions to accomplish the challenge, taking enough time that multiple opportunities for complications can emerge.	Figuring out how to fix the magical ward while dangerous spirits prowl around. Winning the favor of a river spirit over another suitor.
Long	30	Players spend a substantial amount of time trying to resolve an issue, perhaps spanning most of an Episode. Threats and complications have time to develop, possibly requiring resolution before the original challenge.	Stopping the boat from sinking while in a storm. Finding the way out of an underground labyrinth. Figuring out who the assassin is at a dinner party.
Downtime	10-100 (Downtime Actions only)	A major undertaking, done bit by bit in the background over a long period of time.	Designing and building a new vehicle from scratch. Starting a new business. Solving a cold case. Making a new scientific discovery. Building a new institution or community. Making an airtight criminal case against a mob boss.

Example Encounter

The PCs are trying to locate a missing magical amulet before the Lawjacks can.

The GM asks how the PCs will try to find the amulet. One player suggests looking around using their paradigm ability to illuminate magical effects (see "Aetherlight Ditty" on pg 163), another wants to use Observation to look for clues, and one wants to start interviewing people who live close to the scene.

The GM thinks for a second. They could resolve this with a single opposed Test against the Lawjacks, but since the players all offered up neat ideas about how to proceed, Jay wants to make it something a bit longer and more substantive. So they make two Progress Tracks of 20, and goes around the table to see what each player wants to do. If they fail on the Test, the GM decides that the Lawjack track will go up by 3, and additionally he decides that the Lawjacks will roll once each Round.

The players go through their various plans to find the amulet, and the GM assesses the likelihood of each plan succeeding and sets the TN appropriately. The first suggestion is to look for clues in the room it disappeared from—the GM thinks this has a very high probability of working because the magical amulet was stashed in a secret compartment in the room, so they set the TN at 12. On the flip side, nobody nearby knows where it was hidden, and it is a long shot that anyone around could help advance the search, so the GM puts the TN for social progress at 17. For each Test, on a Success the GM provides a clue that moves them towards the final position of the amulet; on a Failure the GM builds tension as they try and furtively work around the Lawjacks and other complications arise...

Health, Animity, and Grit

Health and Animity

Characters in Subversion have two special attributes called **Health** and **Animity**, representing body and mind. Health represents a character's physical vigor, while Animity represents their capacity to deal with mental and emotional stress. These serve as Progress Tracks (see "Progress Tracks" on pg 21) that determine how much disease, setback, incidental damage, or manageable stress a character can take before things start to really affect them.

When a character's Health reaches zero, they take a **Consequence** (see pg 25) and become **Unconscious**. This means they've succumbed to their injuries and are unable to take any actions until their Health is greater than zero. Likewise, when a character takes damage that would reduce them below 0 Animity they gain a **Consequence** and become **Humbled**. This means they are mentally or emotionally exhausted and unable to take any actions targeting another character until their Animity is greater than zero.

Health and Animity can be replenished with certain paradigm abilities like Soothe (see pg 148), using gear like medkits (see pg 102), spending Grit (see below), or as part of Downtime.

Armor

Certain gear or abilities may give characters **Armor**. For every point of Armor a character has, reduce any incoming Health damage by the Armor rank. Sometimes Armor is given with a keyword—in this case the Armor only applies to effects described with that keyword (for example, Armor 2: Fire means any attacks or tests using fire will always do 2 less damage or progress). Sources of Armor stack with each other.

Adamant

Adamant works like Armor, but for the mind. For every point of Adamant a character has, reduce any incoming Animity damage by one. Sometimes, characters are more resilient to certain stimuli, and this will be reflected in notations like the following: Adamant X: Subject. This means the character will have an effective boost to their Adamant, as noted, when it involves the particular subject mentioned (for example, Adamant 2: Death indicates that a character would have +2 Adamant when a character takes Animity damage because they experienced another character's death). Sources of Adamant stack with each other.

Irresistible Damage

Some damage is listed as **Irresistible**. Irresistible damage ignores all Armor and Adamant.

Frightening

Some enemies are so scary, disturbing, or terrifying that they disquiet even the hardiest minds. The first time each scene the PCs encounter a beast, being, or situation with the **Frightening** (X) keyword, the PCs automatically take Animity damage equal to X. Adamant lowers the Animity damage taken by

Frightening by its rank. If characters encounter multiple beasts or beings that are Frightening, only the highest number is in effect—if the characters later encounter something with a higher frightening value they take additional Animity damage equal to the difference in Frightening value (unless Adamant fully blocks the Animity damage).

Additionally, the first time each scene a beast or being with the Frightening keyword attacks or successfully threatens a character, they take damage equal to the frightening value.

If a character does not have the Frightening keyword, but is wielding a weapon that does, only apply Animity damage if the weapon is used to threaten or attack.

Alara encounters a manifested demon with Frightening 4. Alara has Adamant 2 from one of her paradigm abilities, so she takes 2 Animity damage.

GRIT

Grit is that hard to define quality that makes people able to remain resolute even through the toughest of times. It is heart, determination, anger, resolve, and destiny all rolled up into one.

PCs begin the game with Grit equal to Will + 6. Under certain circumstances, they will lose or gain Grit during sessions, but can never start a session with more Grit than their max. On certain occasions, PCs may gain temporary Grit, which goes away after the period of time described.

GMs also possess their own reservoir of Grit, representing the ways the universe pushes back at them. GM Grit is often gained from actions that could cause a nebulous negative effect in the future. GM Grit can be spent on behalf of NPCs in the same way as PCs and for other especial effects. For more details see "GM Grit" on page 246.

Animity Damage Chart

While it may seem more or less obvious what sorts of actions cause Health damage, Animity damage may not be as obvious. In addition to specific effects and abilities that trigger Animity damage, it also occurs in the following common situations. The GM may scale the damage up or down depending on what they feel is narratively appropriate.

PC Experience	Typical Animity Damage
PC acts against their Values	5
PC's long-term goal becomes unachievable	5
PC experiences traumatic sensory input (seeing someone dead or killed for the first time, encountering a personal phobia, seeing lots of blood, seeing people hurt that they can't stop, learning someone they love has betrayed them or betrayed their Values, etc.)	5-15 as per severity
Any time agency (free will) is forcefully or consequentially taken away from a character.	5
PC experiences shame, guilt, extreme anger, regret, inconsistency, heartbreak, job loss, grief, stress, fear or terror, feeling misunderstood, encounters specific places (home, streets, cities, countries) that are triggers, trauma/PTSD, feeling judged, attacked, or invalidated.	5-15 as per severity
PCs cause, directly or indirectly, the death of a PC or NPC	5 (or more if the character was particularly close to them)
PCs encounter beasts or beings with the Frightening keyword.	Equal to Frightening rank

USING AND LOSING GRIT

A character's Grit fluctuates throughout a session as they resist damage or spend it for benefits.

A character may always spend Grit in these ways:

- **1 Grit:** A character can re-roll one of their dice. No dice may be rerolled more than once.
- **2 Grit:** A character gains +5 initiative in a Cinematic scene.
- **3 Grit:** Ignore all **Dulled** penalties for one roll after rolling.
- **4 Grit:** Gain 1 Health and Animity and lose the unconscious and humbled conditions.
- **5 Grit:** Negate the effect of a Success targeting you (but not a Dynamic or Critical Success). This only applies to effects, not to damage or progress.
- **X Grit:** Block X damage or progress from an effect targeting you.

If a character attempts to spend more Grit than they have remaining they must make an immediate **Grit Test** (see below). On a Success they may use their new Grit to help pay the cost. On a Failure, the Grit is lost for no effect, and they suffer the normal results of a failed Grit Test.

GRIT TESTS

If a character spends their last point of Grit they gain a Consequence (see below) and must make a Grit Test. Roll 3d6 (various abilities may provide modifiers to this roll). If the result is 11 or higher, they pass the Test and that PC is resolute. Increase their Grit to 5 (this Grit may be spent immediately if so desired, for example, to block additional damage or progress). If the result is less than 11, they are Busted (See below).

CONSEQUENCES

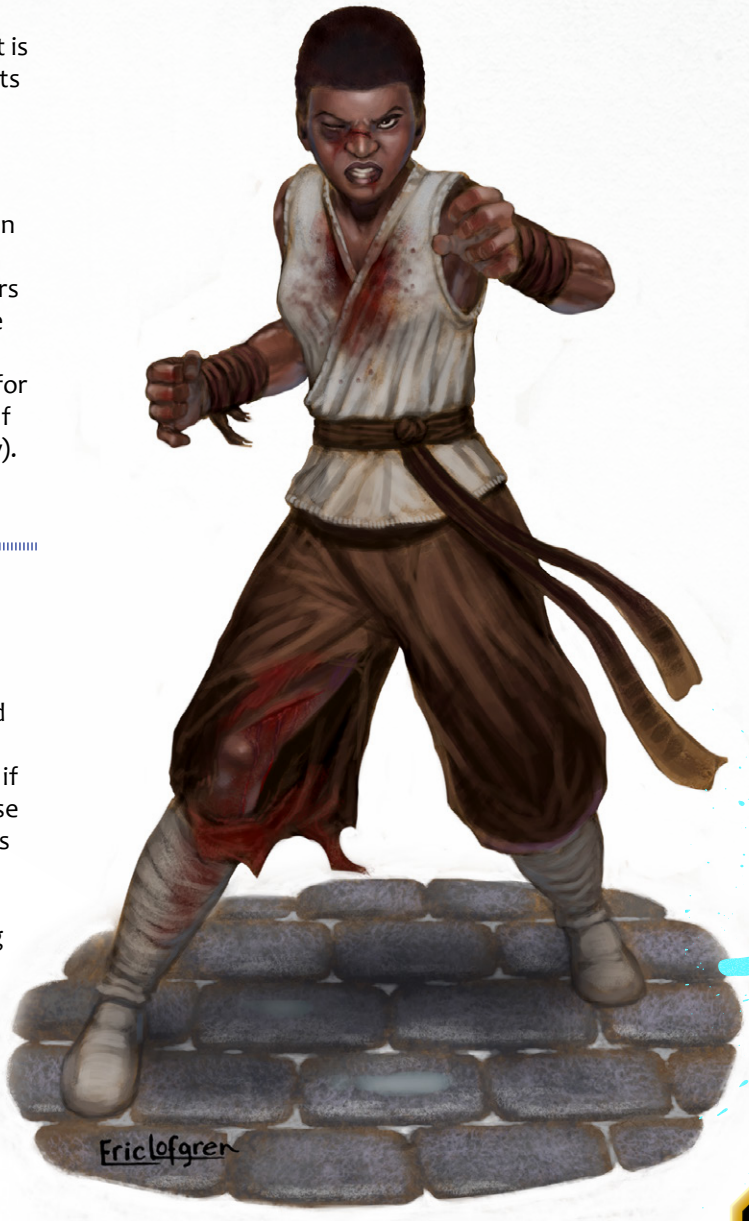
A **Consequence** is something that impedes the character's ability to do things. A character gains a consequence whenever one of the following events occurs:

- When a character is Unconscious or Humbled (when their Health or Animity drops to zero), they gain a Consequence. This happens even if they immediately use Grit to heal or otherwise prevent the effects of becoming Unconscious or Humbled.
- Each time a character takes damage equal to their maximum Health or Animity after being rendered unconscious or humbled. Count cumulative damage taken since being rendered unconscious or humbled. Reset damage taken whenever a Consequence is taken this way.
- When a character runs out of Grit.
- To resist the trigger of an Impulse (see "Triggers" on pg 27).
- Certain other abilities or powers, as mentioned in their description.

The exact form a Consequence takes is up to the player and should relate to how they gained it (e.g. a Consequence from being knocked out in a fight might be a concussion, while one due to Animity damage from a terrifying spirit might be heart-racing panic).

Regardless of origin or flavor, each consequence has the same mechanical effect and gives a character an instance of Dulled. For each additional Consequence the PC gains another instance of Dulled, as described in the Dulled description (see pg 18).

A character may never have more than 5 Consequences. Whenever a character would gain an additional Consequence while they are already have 5 consequences (for example, by taking additional damage equal to their max Health), the GM gains 10 Grit.



BUSTED

When a character takes enough of a beating that they can't keep going, they are said to be **Busted**. There are two ways to become Busted:

- A character fails a Grit Test.
- A character gains 5 consequences.

A Busted character is unable to take any actions, including to protect themselves, and are reliant on others to take care of them, either due to unconsciousness, shell shock, confusion, or a lack of will to fight on. Under most conditions, a Busted character is completely out of commission until the next Downtime, though some PC actions may rescue a Busted character before then.

A character loses the Busted condition when they lose a consequence (see "Recover" on pg 37). When a character becomes no longer Busted, they gain 1 Grit.

PERIL AND DEATH

Being Busted doesn't mean that nothing further can happen to a character—often whatever knocked them out of commission still poses a threat. If they are in continued threat, they may continue to accrue Consequences (or give the GM additional Grit, see above). Furthermore, a Busted character may find themselves captured by some of their opponents, or sent to the purgatorium (see "The Purgatorium" on pg 248).

At any point, instead of taking a consequence or giving Grit to the GM, the player of a Busted PC may choose to allow their character to be killed (or otherwise permanently retired, depending on the nature of the peril). If they do so, the GM loses all of their Grit, and each other PC gains 5 Grit as they're shaken into action by the tragic sacrifice of their compatriot.

NPC DEATH

Deaths, even of the most malevolent individuals, or in self-defense or in the defense of others, always have repercussions, be it blood feuds, spirals of violence, or wanted posters, metaphorical (and in the world of Subversion, not infrequently literal!) hauntings for the killers to deal with.

In addition to Animity loss, when a PC's actions cause the death or deaths of sapient NPCs (either directly or through willful negligence), the GM gains 3 Grit. The GM may increase this for particularly notable (or high death toll) actions.

Injury, Death, and Health in Subversion

In Subversion, death is never automatic. PCs always have the option to give the GM Grit instead of dying, and the fate of defeated NPCs is left to the GM to adjudicate based on whatever makes narrative sense and is the most fun. This will likely vary from game to game (and is an important expectation to set as part of Session Zero (see pg 72)—on some tables, the assumption is that any time a character is damaged beyond being Busted, they will die, while other tables may prefer stories where NPCs return again and again to challenge the PCs.

IMPULSES

People or communities often deal with the complications of life in ways that are ultimately unhealthy or cause collateral damage—in Subversion these are called **Impulses**. An Impulse is a coping method which may be helpful in the short-term, but may cause or reflect deeper harm.

Each Impulse has one or more triggers, a response, and a Downtime Action.

In addition, for each Impulse a PC has above 1, their max Grit is reduced by 1.

TRIGGERS

Triggers are events, objects, situations, or states of mind that cause an Impulse to be activated.

Whenever either the GM or player thinks that a trigger applies, they may trigger the Impulse. If a GM triggers an Impulse, they reduce their Grit by 3. If a player triggers an Impulse, they gain 3 Grit. If this increase in Grit causes a PC to exceed their max Grit, this acts as temporary Grit that lasts until the end of the scene or Cinematic. When an Impulse is triggered, the PC chooses one of the following:

- The character acts out the Impulse's response
- The character must take the Impulse's Downtime Action in the next Downtime.
- The player may resist the Impulse trigger by taking 5 irresistible Animity damage or taking a consequence.

RESPONSES

Responses describe the typical effect of the Impulse being triggered, be it a behavior, complication, or other effect. While the response provides a default option, Players and GMs are encouraged to propose alternative actions or consequences that fit the situation.

DOWNTIME ACTIONS

Some Impulses trigger a slower burn response, instead leading to a later course of action. An Impulse's **Downtime Action** provides a response to the Impulse at a later time. A PC may choose this as the consequence for a triggered Impulse or voluntarily choose to perform it as one of their Downtime Actions (see "Indulge Impulse" on pg 36).

Hanna, a breacher, has the "indulgence" Impulse, specifically around novelty and luxury. The group finds themselves in a shopping mall trying to hide from Lawjacks, but that mall has a halo store selling the latest experimental accessories. Hanna spent a bit of Grit in the last scene, so she decides to indulge her Impulse to gain 3 Grit. Hanna leaves the group behind and forgets about being sneaky as she heads to the halo store to learn about, and perhaps buy, the latest toys for her halo.

Alternatively, the GM could have spent 3 Grit to force this interaction, and Hanna could have gone along, pushed the Impulse inside to let it out at Downtime, or simply taken 5 Animity damage or a consequence to ignore the Impulse.

IMPULSE TYPES

The Impulses listed below are general in nature. When a player chooses an Impulse for their PC, they decide the particular form that Impulse takes.

INDULGENCE

You have a hedonistic pleasure that you turn to when you want to have fun, when you need a pick me up, or sometimes, just because it's there. On a good day you just tell yourself you're enjoying the finer things in life, on a bad day it's just easier than dealing with the important things in life. Sample Indulgences: Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling, Clubbing, Sex, Video-games, etc.

TRIGGERS:

Object of desire being easily available, location where you've indulged in the past, being with someone you've indulged with in the past, being under stress, feeling down.

RESPONSE:

Intoxication: You partake of a drug or other activity that numbs your abilities or connection to the world. If you are addicted to a substance with specific rules (see "Drugs" on pg 102), you take a dose of the drug, following those rules. For other substances or activities, you partake to the point of impairment. Gain a temporary Consequence until the next time you get a full nights sleep.

Distraction: You get distracted by your indulgence, missing your other responsibilities. Gain two instanced of Dulled until the next scene unless you are pursuing (or have indulged in) the subject of your indulgence.

Largesse: You make a large, irresponsible purchase or expenditures. Spend 1 Fortune.

DOWNTIME ACTION:

Indulge: You spent a large chunk of the time partaking of your indulgence to excess. Spend 1 Fortune, recover 3 Grit, and the GM gains 5 Grit.

PHOBIA

Some thing or situation triggers an irrational fear response in you. *Sample phobias: Claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces), Achluophobia (fear of the dark), Acrophobia (fear of heights), Hydrophobia (fear of water), Teraphobia (fear of monsters).*

TRIGGERS:

Object of Phobia being present, or association with a situation where they experience the phobia firsthand, believing that the object of the phobia might be near.

RESPONSE:

Fear: Take 3 Animity damage, and increase the frightening value of the source of the phobia by 5 for the remainder of the scene. If reduced to 0 Animity while in the presence of the object of the Phobia, the character gains an additional consequence.

DOWNTIME ACTION:

Precautions: You become consumed with preparing against the object of your phobias. The first time your phobia is triggered in the next Act Phase, gain 3 temporary Grit (this Grit expires at the end of the scene you encounter the phobia in).

IMPETUOUS

Through overconfidence, poor impulse control, or a love of thrill of uncertainty, you tend to not think through the consequences of your action.

TRIGGERS:

Proposing a bad idea, being faced with a split-second decision, decision making taking too long, accused or confronted with uncomfortable questioning.

RESPONSE:

No take backs (GM trigger only): If the player suggests a plan of action they can immediately embark upon, the GM may trigger this response.

Shouldn't have done that: The player makes a poor or reckless choice (GM discretion).

DOWNTIME ACTION:

Trouble: The character makes a poor decision during Downtime that leads to a downside. Gain 2 Grit and the character and GM each choose one of the following consequences: take 5 irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose one Fortune, break one piece of gear until repaired, decrease the Base Regard of a Relation by one.

PRIDE

You have an excessively high opinion of your own importance resulting in or from a dangerous overconfidence or arrogance. It is common for you to feel you have a right to demand humility or servile behavior from others.

TRIGGERS:

Being insulted or disrespected, being given an opportunity to showcase your strongest skills, being upstaged by someone else, being flattered by someone else.

RESPONSE:

Won't back down: You refuse to retreat, de-escalate, or otherwise avoid a situation where you are challenged.

Full of yourself: You rub another character the wrong way, decreasing their Current Regard towards you by 5.

DOWNTIME ACTION:

Burnish reputation: You attempt to get your due by proving your worth. The GM chooses one of the following: you gain 2 Animity and Grit, or improve an NPC's Regard to you by one. The GM gains 5 Grit.

VALUES

Values are things a character believes in that mark their core principles and drive their behavior. Staying true to their Values can be a source of Grit, but breaking their Values quickly saps it.

In any scene where the player suffered downsides or complications due to their Values, they gain 3 Grit. On the flip side, whenever a character compromises their Values, they take 5 irresistible Animity damage.

If a situation is discordant with a character's Values or goals (that is, whenever either the GM, player, or ideally both, think it makes sense), it can instead trigger a Value in the same ways as an Impulse (this replaces the effect of the above rule). The GM spends 3 Grit and proposes an effect due to the character's Values. If the character rejects the trigger and ignores their Value, they take 5 irresistible Animity damage. If the player proposes triggering a Value, and the GM accepts, the player gains 3 Grit (instead of the GM losing 3 Grit).

Sample Values are listed in Character Creation (pg 90).

Casey has the Value that they will not allow children to get hurt. In the course of an Episode, Casey and the other Envoys come across a refugee camp with injured children in it. The GM decides that this invokes Casey's Value and spends 3 Grit to propose that Casey sacrifices their medkit (worth 1 Fortune) to help out the children. Casey accepts, losing the medkit. If Casey's player had proposed the trigger, they would instead gain 3 Grit for invoking a trigger with a consequence.

Corrupted Values

Sometimes, a Value becomes disruptive to the character and those around them. A **Corrupted Value** may be inherently antisocial (I will never give respect to those beneath me), or simply another Value taken to an extreme (picking "I will never pass up an opportunity to make money" instead of "I will make sure my family is financially secure"). Corrupted Values have two effects: each Corrupted Value reduces your maximum Grit by one, and the GM gains 1 Grit whenever you live up to your Corrupted Value to the detriment of others. Players may pick one Corrupted Value instead of a normal Value at character creation—doing so gives them 5 bonus Fortune. Corrupted Values may be redeemed (see redeeming Values, below).

Betraying Values

In Subversion, there is almost always a way to compromise your Values to get what you want. The cost is high, but for some, suffering moral injury is worth the short term gain – at least in the moment. No more than once per session, a PC may alter the moral trajectory of their life by betraying a Value or trying to redeem one.

If a PC takes an action that goes against one of their Values while making a Test, they can go a step further and renounce that Value, choosing a Corrupted Value to replace it. On this Test, they may replace any two dice result with 6s. The PC still takes all normal penalties for acting against their Values until the next Reflection. When PCs fail a Test, they always have the option to betray before things move on or the GM can introduce any Failure consequences.

A character may not gain this benefit by betraying a Corrupted Value.

Example: Alice is trying to convince the Lawjacks that she's just an innocent bystander to the break-in she was part of. She rolls a 1,2, 3, and 4 on her Deception Test—9: an unconvincing showing. Alice decides that she really needs to succeed at this Test, so she is going to betray one of her Values to do it. Alice has a Value of **loyalty to her friends**, *but in the moment she realizes that she cares more about survival than her friends, and tells the Lawjacks she*

spotted her friend leaving from one of the windows. Because she betrayed a Value, Alice can replace the 2 and 3 from her roll with 6s, and ends up with 6, 6, 4, and 1—with her Charisma this gets her a solid 16. The Lawjacks are distracted by her misdirection, and Alice loses the Value of **loyalty to friends** *and replaces it with the Corrupted Value* **I will always look out for myself**.

Redeeming Values

Alternatively, a PC may redeem a Corrupted Value. In order to do this, a PC must spend at least one entire Episode living up to the non-Corrupted Value they wish to replace it with (and taking any penalties as normal for breaking the corrupted version). Then, at the beginning of a new Episode, they gain a consequence for the duration of the Episode. The PC may renounce the redemption attempt at any time, release themselves from the consequence, and if they do so, the redemption process would start all over. But if they complete the Episode with the consequence and being faithful to their original Value, once that Episode is over, during the Reflection, the PC may revert the betrayed Value back to the original.

Alice has been feeling awful about what happened with the Lawjacks. The realization that, when push came to shove, she valued her own hide over those of her friends has made her question if she was a good person—and as the weeks dragged on she's noticed all the other ways she's acted selfishly at the cost of her friends. Eventually, Alice decides to work at redeeming herself. She tells the GM she is going to try to redeem her Value of loyalty to her friends, and she makes a point to be loyal for an entire Episode, suffering Grit damage along the way as she goes against her current Value of looking out for herself. Once that Episode is complete, Alice decides the time has come to redeem herself. When the next Episode begins, Alice tells the GM she is willing to take a consequence (gaining an instance of Dulled) for the entire Episode to finish her redemption process. She struggles, and has some mishaps, but remains true and finishes the Episode. At the Reflection, she reconciles with her friends and her Value of looking out for herself is redeemed back to loyalty to her friends.

Modes of Play

In gameplay terms, a session is defined as one get-together among friends playing Subversion. Sessions could be 4 hours on Tuesday night over pizza at a friend's house, or 2 hours on Sunday afternoon streaming online.

An **Episode** is a complete short story, usually around one 4-5 hour session, but it can often spill into two or three sessions depending on how long each session is and how much happens in the Episode.

Episodes play out in different modes of play, each of which has different rules. The various modes of play are:

- **Action:** Interacting with the world
- **Downtime:** Resting and dealing with long blocks of time
- **Reflection:** Reflecting on the events and determining rewards and consequences

The GM can move between Action and Downtime as the story requires. Typically this will involve an Episode in Action mode followed by Downtime, though if the story involves substantial time between events it may make sense to intersperse one or more Downtimes in an Episode.

Reflection is generally intended to take place at the end of each session (while events are fresh in people's minds), though it can sometimes make sense to skip to Reflection at a major narrative break, even if you plan on continuing to play more that day.

Each of these modes are described in more detail in the following chapters.

Action

The **Action Mode** is when the PCs head out into the world to solve the problems of the community and achieve their own goals. The Action Mode is split up between **Dramatic Time** and **Cinematic Time** (also referred to as **Cinematics**). Dramatic Time refers to any time where keeping precise track of time doesn't matter and the players aren't under time pressure and can act without constraint. In contrast, Cinematic Time covers scenes where time is carefully kept track of and players alternate acting in turns.

DRAMATIC TIME

Dramatic Time is any period of time where players are interacting with the world but there is no immediate time pressure. This isn't to say that things don't happen for them to react to—but when something happens the players have time to react and can usually take multiple actions in response to events without being interrupted.

Common Dramatic Time scenes include social interactions, most infiltrations, long journeys, and investigations.

Any action that can be taken in Cinematics can also be taken in Dramatic Time. Unlike in Cinematics, where the consequence of Failure is a lost action in a situation where every action counts, Failures in Dramatic Time have their own complications (see "Failure" on pg 18). These complications prevent characters from simply continuing to try until they succeed—at least not without suffering some setbacks on the way.

CINEMATICS

Cinematics represent scenes where characters are taking advantage of every second available to them to do something, and both the characters and any opponents are acting at the same time and reacting to each other.

Subversion breaks Cinematics into Rounds and Turns, in which every participant uses actions. During a **Round**, every character in the Cinematic will have a **Turn**. Once everyone has taken their Turn, a new Round starts. Unless otherwise stated, every character only gets one Turn per Round.

Rounds continue until the PCs have won, lost, or the Cinematic ends by other means.

WHEN TO USE CINEMATICS

Cinematics are used whenever there's a time pressure on the players with consequences (to them or others) for Failure, either because there is a danger that actively threatens the PCs until it's overcome, or there's a timer of some sort that the PCs need to overcome. Common examples of Cinematics:

- Combat (every Round the PCs fail to end the combat brings more risk to them)
- Chases (if the PCs fail, their opponents will end the chase)
- Dangerous environmental hazards (i.e. the room is filling with water, or the artifact is emitting harmful radiation)
- Breaching against an actively defended system
- A tense standoff or negotiation that threatens to escalate
- A formal social situation where PCs only have limited opportunity to make their case (e.g. a formal debate or trial)

TIME AND CINEMATICS

Generally speaking, a Round is enough time to achieve something meaningful, however long that makes sense for in that Cinematic. For a normal action scene, each Round corresponds to about 6 seconds—enough time to do something meaningful while moving around—but the GM may decide that a Round covers substantially longer (or shorter) than that as makes sense for the situation.

TURNS

On a character's Turn, they may take one Main Action and one Backup Action, or two Backup Actions, as well as a narratively appropriate number of **free actions**. These actions are described in detail below.

RANGE

Range in Subversion is measured in meters. Whenever a Range is given, that is the maximum range an ability can be used at.

Sometimes an ability requires touching a target. This is given as Range Touch (or **T**). To use a T range ability, you must be adjacent to a target (i.e. within 1 meter).

Occasionally, some abilities also have a minimum Range—in this case their Range is given as a band between two numbers (e.g. a weapon that can't be used at distances shorter than 10m and can be used up to 200 meters will be written as 10–200m).

Tactical Movement and Distance

Most scenes in Subversion don't need extremely carefully measured distance—and even scenes like combat can be played while only vaguely keeping track of distance. We give specific ranges because a) some groups prefer to play on maps with defined grids, and b) it's easier to fudge precise distances rather than make up exact distances on the spot every time.

STARTING A CINEMATIC

INITIATIVE /ACTION ORDER

Each character has an initiative score (see "Initiative" on pg 97), which dictates the order in which characters take their Turns in Cinematics. Cinematics occur in descending order of initiative. On a tie, the PCs go first. If multiple PCs or NPCs have the same initiative score, they decide among themselves.

SURPRISE ROUND

If a character initiates the Cinematic before the other side is ready, they get one Round to act before unaware characters can act. By default, only characters preparing for imminent action can act in the **Surprise Round**. Characters who are not prepared for action but aware of the character (such as their allies or other characters that are aware and paying attention to them) may spend 1 Grit to act in the Surprise Round. Other characters may choose to spend 3 Grit to act in the Surprise Round. The instigating character goes first, after which all other participants in the Surprise Round act in initiative order.

ACTIONS

There are four types of actions characters can make: **Main Actions**, **Backup Actions**, **Free Actions**, and **Interrupt Actions.** On a character's Turn, they may take one Main Action and one Backup Action, or two Backup Actions.

Main Actions

Main Actions are the things characters do that are essential to winning the Cinematic. Any actions that directly affect a Progress Track or inflict damage are Main Actions. Some actions which don't directly affect progress may still be Main Actions because they are so potent.

ATTUNE

Sacred magic users use prayers and other mental practices to prevent their magic from destroying their mental well-being. See Casting Sacred Magic (pg 66) for more details.

DISTRACT

You use whatever you have on hand to distract or degrade the opponent's performance. This could be laying down suppressive fire with a machine gun, drawing attention away by running, or throwing your voice. Choose a skill and describe what you're doing to distract or disorient. Roll your chosen skill vs Vigilance of a target within 30m. On a Success, the target takes a -2 on actions on their next Turn.

USE A SKILL

The player uses a skill to accomplish a task or make progress towards a goal, deal damage, or cause an effect.

USE A PARADIGM ABILITY

Many paradigm abilities, as specified in their descriptions, require a Main Action to use.

HARMONIZE

Casting all but the simplest arcane spells requires time gathering the correct types of mana. See Casting Arcane Magic (pg 62) for more details.

HOLD ACTION

You may take the hold action to specify a condition to take a Main Action under. If that condition occurs before your next Turn, you may immediately take a Main Action, interrupting the current Turn for your Main Action.

MAJOR MOVE

You make an effort to move as fast as you can, or focus on the terrain to close or open the distance to another target.

A character can increase their Speed by one (up to their maximum Speed, by default one). If a character or vehicle has the Acceleration quality (pg 113), they may instead increase Speed by their Acceleration value.

If a character is already at their top Speed, they may make a Piloting or Physicality Test (as appropriate) against a TN equal to their current Speed+8. On a Success the character or their vehicle (as appropriate) take 1 irresistible Health damage and increase their top Speed until the end of the Round by one.

When a character takes the Major Move action, they may also take Minor Move as a Free Action.

Major Move has special rules in chase scenes, see Chases (pg 55).

CHANGE THE RULES

A character may use a Main Action to attempt to add a new Progress Track to the Cinematic, representing an alternative method of resolving the Cinematic (for example, a character might want to attempt to run away by initiating a chase, hide, or convince an opponent to join their side). Make a relevant opposed Test as specified by the rules appropriate for that Progress Track (e.g. Stealth vs Observation for sneaking, Physicality vs Physicality for a chase) or determined by the GM. On a Success, you create a Progress Track appropriate to the situation, which may either provide a new route to end the scene or establish an obstacle that the other side must circumvent before continuing their original goal.

Backup Actions

A **Backup Action** is an action that isn't time-consuming or complicated enough to be a Main Action, but is still tactically important to a Cinematic. Characters can use one Backup Action on their Turn. Backup Actions don't advance Progress Tracks or reduce Health, but they often give ancillary bonuses or penalties that may make winning easier.

DEFEND

A PC may spend a Backup Action to take advantage of an element of the situation to improve their defenses. What this looks like depends on the Cinematic (it might be name-dropping an influential ally in a social Cinematic or ducking for cover behind a wall in a fire-fight), but in order to take the defend action, the player must make use of elements already present in the scene.

Taking the defend action gives a +2 to a specified defense (Guard, Aegis, or Vigilance). In addition, characters taking the Defend action can neither benefit from, nor be affected by, Dynamic or Critical Successes. Both effects last until the end of the defending character's next Turn.

INTERACT

When a player wants to do something significant to the world (open a window, pick up an object, etc), it requires a Backup Action. The GM may decide that particularly large or cumbersome actions require a Main Action to Interact with.

MINOR MOVE

You may move some distance as a Backup Action. By default a character may move up to 10m as a Backup Action, representing walking interspersed with other actions.

A character moving at a Speed greater than zero (see Major Move) moves a number of meters given by the table to the right. If a character does not move at least as far away from their starting position as the minimum value listed for their Speed, decrease their Speed to correspond to how far they actually moved (if they moved less than 10 m decrease their Speed to zero). Any Turn a character does not take the Minor Move action, their Speed decreases to zero.

When using the Piloting skill, a character may take Minor Move as a Free Action (as their vehicle or mount handles the basics of moving).

A character may take only one Minor Move action each Turn.

Note: These distances are provided when it's necessary to keep track of or estimate range when a fast character is moving—for chases we recommend using the Chase rules (see "Chases" on pg 55).

Speed	Example	Distance Moved
0	Walking	0-10m
1	Running	11-30m
2	Athlete Sprinting	31-50m
3	Residential Traffic	51-75m
4	Galloping Horse / Traffic on Main Road	76-100m
5	Gryphon/Free-way Traffic	101-150m
6	Most Car Top Speeds	151-225m
7	Helicopter	226-350m
8	Super Cars	351-500m
9	Tilt Rotor VTOLs	501-750m
10	Jets	751-1250m
+1		x1.5

FOCUS AND AIM

Whether shutting out all distractions or aiming a weapon, as a Backup Action, a player may focus on their action (such as aiming a weapon or concentrating on a spell, etc.). This gives +1 bonus to the next time the player makes a specified skill Test. You may focus a number of additional times equal to half the ranks you posess in a skill (round up) for a +1 bonus for each focus action, though taking any action other than focusing or using the focused skill negates the bonus. Note: Focus and Aim may be done outside of Cinematic time, but in this case, each use of focus instead increases the amount of time the action takes by 50%.

Free Actions

A **Free Action** is an action that is not likely to have a significant impact on the Cinematic and requires very little effort or time. There are no hard limits on how many free actions a character may use, but the GM has the final say on when more free actions are no longer narratively appropriate.

Some examples of free actions:

- Dropping something
- Making a face
- Speaking a sentence
- Pushing a button on a device

Interrupt Actions

An **Interrupt Action** is an action that can be taken at any time, even on another Turn. Once a character has taken any given Interrupt Action, they cannot that Interrupt Action again until the start of their next Turn.

Ending a Cinematic

A Cinematic usually ends when the PCs have made full progress on a track, have reduced their opponent's Health or Animity, have been defeated, or a loss condition has been achieved. After a Cinematic ends, the GM will describe the aftermath (or allow the PCs to do so) and the story slips back to Dramatic Time.

Losing Isn't Bad!

It can be tempting for PCs to feel the need to win the Cinematic at all costs. Losing can provide narrative tension, and ultimately set the character up for a better story in the future. Consider how often in books, movies, and games that losing is a crucial part of the hero's overall journey. Don't be afraid of losing Cinematics. Value them and learn to enjoy losing as much as winning.

Downtime

"Building up what we love is more important than tearing down what we hate."
Gula Belmar, Envoy from Sappir Village

Downtime represents any narratively appropriate length of time where there isn't anything urgent or pressing acting on the PCs. Downtime offers the PCs opportunity to recover, engage in long duration projects, and focus inward to home and role playing within the community. Players may role play or discuss in-character and play out how their characters are going to use their Downtime (see Downtime Actions, below).

Downtime is also about refining the community. How will it build? What are its philosophies? What are its goals? How does it handle conflict? Who are its members? What is different about it since the last session (or because of it)?

Scenes might include, for example, a training montage for how a character improved a skill or learned a new paradigm, or a scene of characters working with their friends to help build a new community gym. Conflicts should generally not be a part of these scenes, but activities may lead to goals or conflicts after the Downtime is over.

The GM and Players should discuss how the community narratively and mechanically changes based on the players' wishes and PCs' actions.

RESTING

By default, a character is presumed to rest, regaining 1 Grit and and 5 points to divide amongst Health & Animity as you desire.

Downtime Actions

Each Downtime, each PC may take a single Downtime Action, representing how they're spending their time between the action. Players may gain additional Downtime Actions in the following ways:

- A character gains an additional Downtime Action if they pay the maintenance cost of their lifestyle (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37), as they use their resources or savings to replace their day job or other work they normally do to support themselves.
- A character may gain an additional Downtime Action by taking 1 irresistible Animity damage and forgoing rest (see above).

ADVANCE DOWNTIME TRACK

Make progress on a longterm goal with a **Downtime Track** (see pg 21), or start a new one. Choose a skill and describe how your character is employing that skill to work towards the goal.

You may also start a new Downtime Track as part of this action. Work with the GM to determine length and TNs. A few examples below:

- **Increase Relation Power:** You work to help out a Relation and increase their ability and clout. Make a Progress Track with a TN of 10 equal to their current Power x5 (x10 for Faction relations). On a Success, pay 5 Fortune (10 for Faction relations) and increase their Power by one.
- **Project:** You work to build something. Make a Progress Track with a TN of 10 and a length equal to twice the Fortune cost of the gear, community resource, or other project. When you complete the Progress Track, pay Fortune equal to half the normal cost.
- **Repair:** You work to fix a damaged object or vehicle (see "Damage to Objects" on pg 59). Make a Progress Track equal to the amount of damage the target has taken, and make progress on a TN 10 Tech Test. For each point of Fortune you spend as part of the Test, gain Augment 5 on the Test.

AID RECOVERY

Make a TN 11 Sciences or Arts Test and choose another PC who took the Recover Downtime Action. On a Success, they heal an additional 5 Health (Sciences), or 5 Animity (Arts).

INDULGE IMPULSE

If an Impulse Downtime Action was triggered, you must take its corresponding Downtime Action in the next Downtime (see "Downtime Actions" on pg 27).

You may also choose to trigger an Impulse during Downtime. In this case you gain the 3 Grit for player trigger Impulses (in addition to any other Grit gained from the Downtime Action).

INTERACT WITH RELATION

You spend time boosting your personal or community Relations (see "Relations" on pg 120). Pick one of the following options:

- **Smooth Over Problem:** Reset a Relation's Regard for you to their Base Regard.
- **Boost Relationship:** Increase a Relation's Current Regard to you by 3. If this brings their Regard above their Base Regard, you may spend 2 Fortune (4 Fortune for Faction relations) to increase their Base Regard by one. You may instead increase their Regard by 1 for everyone in the community.
- **Visit Relation:** Use the ability of a Relation or resource with a specified Downtime Action in their description (see "Relation Archetype" on pg 121).

RECOVER

You work to recover from a wound, trauma, or other effect that is holding you back. Gain 1 Health, Animity, and Grit and remove one **Consequence**. You may not take the recover action if you forwent rest.

SIDE GIG

You do some work to make extra Fortune. Make a TN 12 skill Test using an appropriate skill. On a Success, gain 2 Fortune.

Hustling for money often comes with a side of risk—the GM gains 1 Grit each time a character takes this option.

PREPARE FOR TROUBLE

You spend time preparing for some problem that might be facing the community. Describe what you're doing and make a skill Test against TN 10. On a Success, the GM loses 2 Grit and you may move the starting position of a Progress Track 5 points in your favor during the next Act Phase. Examples:

- Scout out a building before breaking in (Observation, increase starting Concealment by 5)
- Make introductions or earn good will with a group you'll need to ask a favor of (Influence, increase their Current Regard by 5 for the next Act Phase)
- Scope out an escape route away from a heist (Observation, increase starting escape track by 5 for a Chase)
- Establish an elaborate disguise or false identity for infiltrating an event (Deception, increase starting Concealment by 5)
- Look for back doors in a computer system (Tech, decrease Firewall by 5)

Each PC who takes this action (regardless of success) raises the Grit cost for the GM to trigger a community Impulse or Catastrophe by 3.

Prepare for Trouble

It's Downtime for the team, but they know during the next Action, they need to infiltrate a purgatorium to rescue their friend. Daphne wants to scout the prison before they go in.

GM: Okay, you're wanting to give your group an edge going in by staking out the prison.

Daphne: OK, my Physicality is 2, and my Agility is 4. I rolled... 17!

GM: Nice! That's a Dynamic Success. Since the Lawjacks aren't expecting any trouble tonight, you find it rather easy to observe the facility in detail. You spend time hidden just outside the compound seeing where they go and what they do, and you see that there are times when the shifts change, and things are bit looser and less regimented. This means that if your group goes in just before a shift change, you'll have a harder time getting detected. You will start your infiltration at +10 concealment, and I lose 4 Grit as you eliminate some future surprises.

MAINTAIN LIFESTYLE

As part of Downtime, players keep up with their expenses. By default characters are assumed to maintain their lifestyle through a day job that covers their expenses, though characters can also pay Fortune to cover their lifestyle, which is based on their caste:

- **Undercity:** 0 Fortune
- **Lower:** 1 Fortune
- **Lower-Middle:** 2 Fortune
- **Upper-Middle:** 4 Fortune
- **Upper:** 10 Fortune
- **Elite:** 20 Fortune

A character may optionally pay for a different lifestyle, gaining the trappings of that lifestyle until the next Downtime (see "Caste Gear" on pg 99). If this is below their lifestyle, a character takes 3 Animity damage and the GM gains 3 Grit for each level below their caste their lifestyle is.

PAY DEBT

At the end of each Downtime, any characters with debt must resolve one of the options for each point of debt they have (see "Step 8. Choose Debt" on pg 94).

Reflection

Reflection comes at the end of each session of play, before everyone leaves the table. This is where the group comes together to talk about what their characters did. Did they accomplish the goals they wanted to? Is anything different now? What did they do right? What did they do wrong? If they did wrong, how can they make amends or right it? How will next time be different? Was there any Grit damage as a result of the action?

This is usually out of character talk, and happens after gameplay sessions. When the action part of a session is over, the players reflect on what happened. This is where the GM and Players discuss:

- Did PCs stay true to their Values?
- Did PCs stay true to their community's Values?
- Did PCs accomplish any session or long-term goals?
- Was there anything that happened that may have caused Animity damage upon reflection (aside from damage that wasn't already applied)?

Once the group agrees, the GM gives out Fortune (or in some cases penalties) to the Characters, who can then use them to progress in various ways. Fortune is an abstraction of the wealth, experiences, and training a PC needs to grow their abilities.

Session Reward Chart

This chart serves only as a guide for rewards (or consequences) GMs can hand out during the Reflection. GMs should feel free to increase or decrease these amounts as their preference or table's culture dictates.

Accomplishing a community goal or hitting a major milestone:	5 Fortune
Completion of a session:	1 Fortune/each hour of play
Staying true to all of the character's Values:	1 Fortune/session
Breaking Community Values:	Lose 1 Downtime Action & give GM 3 Grit/Value broken. Also see Faction Regard below
Other sources of Animity Damage.	Check the Animity Damage chart on (see pg 24) to see if there was any causes of Animity loss that wasn't already applied during the session.
Acting for or against a Faction's interests:	Add or subtract Regard per instance (see below)

Update Goals

Check over the Community Goals (see pg 82) and decide whether any have been achieved. When the PCs achieve a Community Goal, one ongoing community Impulse effect of their choice ends.

For every goal you achieve on your community's behalf the GM chooses a new one (though suggestions from players are welcome!).

Primary Goal

Regardless of if any goals were accomplished in the session, players choose a primary goal—the goal that's the party's top priority for the next session. This can be an outstanding community goal, or a new goal chosen by the players. This gives an opportunity for the GM to plan for the next session—assuming something doesn't intervene to interrupt their plans.

These can make good interpersonal role playing prompts, such as if a goal is to "Visit Uriel's home in Churuq," or "Attend a party together where we get to know each other." Primary goals don't need to be dramatic, or even accomplished in a session, but they should drive some of the characters' actions. Some sample primary goals:

- We should find a job
- We need to rescue a Relation from a gang
- We want to find a Yojin for training
- We should find some food
- We need to protect a Relation
- We need to impress a faction
- We need to get some weapons
- We need to stop the flooding
- We want to find something fun to do
- We need to find a way into the undercity

OFFER TO HELP SOMEONE IN THE COMMUNITY

If the players don't have a specific goal in mind, they may choose to instead go to the community to look for an issue to respond. In this case, all the PCs gain 2 grit and the GM loses 5 grit. The GM picks a primary goal (or creates a new one) as the path for the next session. This counts as a community goal for the purposes of rewards and ending community impulses (see pg 80).

CATASTROPHE

The GM can also spend Grit to create a **Catastrophe** (see pg 246). Something horrible has gone wrong, and the players need to respond immediately to prevent even further chaos. In this case, the primary goal becomes to resolve the catastrophe, and the players may not use the option to offer to help someone in the community.

Update Regard for Factions and Relations

The players and GM should also consider the events, consequences, and actions of the PCs and how they affect the goals and values of relations, factions, and their community (particularly any they interacted with in that session).

Typically, Base Regard will only increase by one point per episode, though exceptions exist (e.g. if you avert a disaster). Falls in Base Regard due to betrayals or threats can be much more precipitous, however! Additionally, the GM gets one Grit for each decrease in base regard.

The GM should apply their own judgment on the impact of their action. As a general rule, it requires larger acts to shift opinions the further from neutral you get—it's easy to make a good first impression, but harder to get someone to completely throw in with you, and similarly, it's easy to get someone annoyed at you, but you have to do more to get them to spend effort trying to destroy you.

Community, faction, and relations are covered in more details in on page 120.

UPDATING COMMUNITY REGARD

If the PCs' community Regard is 5 or less, it improves by one if the PCs accomplished any community goals.

If the PCs violated one or more of the community's goals or values, they risk decreasing the community's Regard towards them. Make an Influence test with a TN equal to 10 (+ 3 for every value violated). On a failure, decrease the base regard of the community towards them by one.

Weyjane and Voktu did the best they could, but they had to violate one of their community's values in order to save their friend. Their community forbids seeking outside help, but their friend Orlais needed a hospital quick. On the way to the hospital, they defied a group of Blue Raider gangers demanding tribute for passing through their turf.

When the Reflection comes around, they think back on those actions, recognizing they violated one of their community's rules and acted against another faction.

In regard to the Blue Raider gang, each of them simply lose 1 Regard with that faction for defying their wishes on their own turf.

To see if they lose Regard with their home faction, both Weyjane and Voktu make an influence test equal to 8 + 3 for each value violated, in this case 1, bringing the TN to 11. Weyjane and Voktu roll 8 and 11 on their influence tests, respectively. So Weyjane would lose 1 Regard with her community, while Voktu would not.

Reflecting In Character

Most groups will default to performing the Reflection phase as an out of character discussion—but it's not the only option! Reflection can be anything from an in-character discussion between the PCs at a restaurant after the action to a series of in character interviews a la reality TV—be creative!

NOTHING IS
SIBLE

PART II
EXTENDED RULES

The following chapters are an expansion of the basic rules for common types of scenes, providing specific rules for Progress Tracks and actions related to those scenes. Furthermore, we hope that these rules provide inspiration in guidance in how to adapt the basic rules for Progress Tracks and cinematics to new challenges that might face the PCs.

- Social Encounters (pg 42)
- Stealth (pg 46)
- Breaching (pg 50)
- Chases (pg 55)
- Combat (pg 57)
- Magic (pg 60)

Social Encounters

Whether you're asking for help from a friend, navigating a hostage situation, or simply trying to not stick out a party, social situations are one of the most common interactions characters have with the world.

In Subversion, Social Encounters are defined by two features: **Regard**, the measure of the opinion a character has of another, and **Asks**, what a character is trying to get from another character.

REGARD

Regard is a measure of how willing an NPC is to help (or hinder) another. Regard is a Progress Track that ranges from -15 to 15, corresponding to the opinion they have of you.

The **Base Regard** of an NPC is determined by the GM, based on any biases they have for or against the character and the player's Regard.

On top of that, the GM may also adjust their **Current Regard** of the NPC based on the situation—even normally genial people tend to be quite aggressive when they find you unexpectedly in their house!

Most ways of changing Regard only affect **Current Regard**—but if PCs take the time to cultivate relationships over the long term, they can create steadfast friends and allies willing to help them in the future, or at least have fewer enemies trying to make life difficult for them.

NPCs that the players have a long term connection to are called Relations. Rules for creating relations are part of character creation and can be found in Relations (pg 120).

Roleplay vs "Rollplay"?

For many groups, the best part about a social scene is the chance to be immersed in character and roleplay out the situation. Often, rolls and rules feel like they can get in the way of this—breaking the immersion.

All of the social rules boil down to two basic questions—what is the NPC's attitude towards the PCs (their Regard), and are the PCs trying to get them to do something disproportionate to the how much the NPC likes (or hates) the PCs (the Ask). In an immersive scene, these questions can be shown by dialogue and reactions, and only stated in mechanical terms when necessary.

Both Regard and Asks can be influenced without rolling. Doing things to win someone over makes them think better of you (Deeds), and the strength of an Ask fluctuates as the parties negotiate exactly what the deal is (Renegotiate). These allow a push and pull to occur without needing to spend time rolling.

What is the point of rolls then? Rolls represent opportunities to influence the situation beyond concrete actions, either when making a first impression, trying to charm someone, or pushing them to accept an Ask that is just out of their comfort zone. Rolls provide narrative tension where it feels like a discussion could go in either direction.

Rolls also play an important role in characterization—they provide the difference between suave salesmen who can push the most tenuous deals and awkward wallflowers who live life with their foot in their mouth. Even in groups that favor immersive roleplay, including key rolls gives characters that invested in social skills a chance to show off what they're good at. This is especially important when there are mismatches between the most charismatic *characters* and the most charismatic *players*...

Of course, not every social scene is worth playing out in detail—in these cases rolls provide a quick way of resolving a situation and getting on to other parts of the story!

Regard Value	Description
11 – 15	**Allied:** The NPC is working with you towards your goal
6 – 10	**Friendly:** The NPC likes you and will take opportunities to help you
1 – 5	**Favored:** The NPC generally is favorable towards you and gives you the benefit of the doubt
0	**Neutral:** The NPC has no positive or negative opinions of you
-1 – -5	**Unfavored:** The NPC generally doesn't like you and is suspicious of you
-6 – -10	**Antagonistic:** The NPC is opposed to you and will take opportunities to hinder you
-10 – -15	**Hostile:** the NPC is actively attempting to stop you by any means they deem appropriate

CHANGING REGARD

As a Progress Track, Regard can be changed by actions to shift it from negative to positive. Upon first meeting a character, their Regard can be changed with **First Impressions**. After that point, it can be changed by using social skills to **Charm** them, or make progress by doing **Deeds** for them. Long term changes in Regard typically take time, requiring investing time to tend the Relation.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Upon meeting a new character, the player may make a **First Impressions** Influence Test against the target's Vigilance to try and influence their reaction. On a success, increase Regard by 5. On a Failure, decrease Regard by 3 (unless another consequence makes more sense, see "Failure" on page 18).

The GM may decide that Influence can be replaced with another skill depending on the situation: maybe the players are giving a show, and their Arts roll wins over everyone in the crowd, or they attempt to impress the scientist with their own knowledge, or a prospective employer with their skills. Players are encouraged to come up with creative ways of making a good impression, but the GM has final say.

Losing Base Regard

For chronic mistreatment, or particularly heinous treatment or betrayal, a GM may lower the Base Regard of a PC's Relation.

CHARM

Main Action

Charm is an attempt to temporarily win over a character. Make an Influence roll against Vigilance, increased by their Regard value, whether positive or negative (i.e. -4 Regard and +4 Regard both add 4 to Vigilance). On a success, increase Regard by 5 until the end of the next downtime. On a Failure, further charm attempts are impossible until their Regard has been improved by a deed or until the next Downtime, whichever is first.

DEEDS

Regard can also change based on significant favors or actions taken to help or hinder the NPC. A **Deed** is anything you do to benefit or harm an NPC and changes their opinion of you. The GM is the final arbiter of when an action changes Regard. While most deeds will only provide a temporary change to Regard, some deeds may change their **Base Regard**—permanently changing their opinion of the character.

TENDING RELATIONSHIPS

Without effort, relations tend to fall by the wayside. Any changes in Current Regard disappear at the end of the next Downtime. If a player spends time keeping in touch by taking the Boost Relationship Downtime Action (see pg 37), they can convert changes in Current Regard to changes in Base Regard.

Whenever the Base Regard of an NPC is modified (either by the Boost Relationship action or by Deeds), PCs should list the character as a Relation—a character they have a long-term relationship who may provide them with help (or hindrances) in the future. More rules on Relations are found later (see pg 120).

ASKS

While Regard measures the attitude of an NPC, an **Ask** represent any attempts to get the NPC to do anything. Each Ask has a rating from -15 to 15, with higher numbers corresponding to more difficult Asks. By default, an NPC will perform any Ask lower than their Regard (In other words, an Ask of -15 is something you can convince even your worst enemy to do, while an Ask of 15 is something only your best friend would do without substantial amounts of coaxing). An Ask higher than the NPC's Regard requires either changing their Regard (see the previous section), or spending some effort to convince them of the reasonableness or importance of the Ask (see Convince, below).

A successful Ask, particularly a higher rating Ask, will often lower the Current Regard of an NPC by an amount determined by the GM—asking for multiple big favors in a row is likely to decrease a Relation's willingness to help you, at least not without helping them out in return.

SOCIAL ACTIONS

The following actions are generally used when the value of an Ask is too high for an NPC to do automatically, the PCs may have to spend time convincing the NPC to do it.

CONVINCE

Main Action

The PCs can also attempt to convince a reluctant NPC to accept the Ask through persuasion, inspiration, or deception. After providing a relevant argument to shift their mind, roll an appropriate skill against the targets Vigilance. On a success, decrease the value of the Ask by five. On a Failure, they may be no longer amenable to discussion on the topic, or their Regard may decrease (see "Failure" on pg 18).

RENEGOTIATE

Main Action

The PCs can attempt to lower the rating of the Ask by asking for less, or agreeing to provide some benefit in response. Once the players have laid out a new set of terms sufficient to decrease the rating of the Ask, they may attempt another Convince roll (even if they were blocked from trying again as a complication for Failure).

SWEETEN THE DEAL

The PCs can attempt to lower the rating of the Ask by offering the NPC Fortune. By default, lower the rating of the Ask by three for each point of Fortune offered, to a maximum of -15 for 5 Fortune spent. The GM may modify this based on the situation or the caste of the target—in the undercity a single Fortune might be enough to convince a stranger to put their life at risk, while a CEO might not bat an eye until the numbers get higher than most people have ever seen!

Failure

The cardinal rule of rolling is that you should only roll if the result matters. Failing a test doesn't mean that the scene is over however! Instead, Failure means that the desired approach, with the desired conditions won't work. The players may still get what they want if they try again—they may just need to provide more favorable terms when they Renegotiate, or try and perform Deeds to convince the others to look more favorably to them.

THREATEN

Main Action

You attempt to get what you want by an overt or covert threat or blackmail. Decrease their Regard of you by 5 and make a roll to deliver your threat—for purely verbal threats roll Influence or Deception against the target's Vigilance. You may roll any skill related to your threat if you can stage a demonstration (e.g. a weapon skill if you're threatening violence, or Tech if you're threatening them with breaching). On a success, decrease the value of the Ask by 10 and deal Animity damage equal to your charisma, plus any Frightening you might have (either due to abilities or wielded weapons).

BERATE

Main Action

The PC attempts to deal Animity damage directly to an NPC by verbally attacking them, using whatever hurtful tone, volume, subject, or language they can. Roll an Influence or Deception Test versus the target's Vigilance. On a success, deal 1d6 + Charisma Animity damage and decrease their Regard by the same amount.

Ask Rating	Description	Examples
-15 (Strongly Benefits Other Character)	Agree to stop an action with significant risk to themselves. Something even your worst enemy will agree to do.	Convincing someone to leave a building that's about to collapse.
-10	Accept an agreement that benefits the NPC. Something an enemy will agree to do.	Convincing a merchant to take your money and let you buy something, convincing an enemy to walk away from a fight they think they'll lose.
-5	Accept a mutually beneficial agreement. Something someone who dislikes you will agree to do.	Making a fair deal. Convincing an enemy to walk away from a fight they are unsure if they'll win.
0 (No major effect to other character)	Help the PCs at minimal or no cost to themselves. Something an average person will agree to do.	Providing basic information, swaying someone between two choices they're indifferent on.
5	Help the PCs at a minor cost or risk to themselves. Something someone who likes you will agree to do.	Spend a free afternoon helping you out. Convincing a Lawjack to let a minor offense slide. Convince someone to walk away from a fight they think they'll win.
10*	Help at a major cost or risk to themselves. Something a friend will do.	Skipping a day of work to help you out.
15* (Strongly disadvantages other character)	Help the PCs at major risk to their life or livelihood. Something your best friend will agree to do.	Agreeing to be your getaway driver for a robbery, convincing a Lawjack to not arrest you knowing they'll get fired.
Increase Rating (or impossible)	Violate NPC's Value or Goal	Asking a law-abiding citizen to be your getaway driver for an armed robbery
Decrease Rating (or automatic)	Matches NPC's Value, Goal, or Impulse	Convincing your hedonist friend to go clubbing with you

*Asks of 10 or greater are likely to lead to a decrease in Current Regard

Stealth

Whether it's a vigilante creeping along rooftops, a thief silently tracking their mark, or a frightened rebel hiding behind a car from the Lawjacks, stealth plays a large part in almost every kind of story. In these kinds of stories, much swings on whether the enemies discover the good guys and can catch them.

To channel the narrative tension of stealth into gameplay, we use a Progress Track called **Concealment**.

Simple Observation Tests vs Concealment

Not every situation involving something hidden requires a concealment track. Like all Progress Tracks, Concealment is designed for situations that slowly evolve over time. Snap questions of whether the party notices something in their vicinity are better resolved by an Observation Test (either opposed or against a simple TN). A party that passes near a tree with a lurking jaguar in it doesn't need to bother with concealment—a simple Observation Test is fine. On the flip side, if the jaguar starts stalking them through the jungle (or vice versa!) concealment may be more appropriate.

CONCEALMENT

The **Concealment** Progress Track represents how hidden a character (or group) is from another in a situation where the hiding party has an opportunity to craft their approach or detection may require multiple actions to reveal the hiding party. Concealment takes different forms based on the situation, ranging from sneaking past a guard, blending in at a party, or avoiding suspicion in an investigation.

Concealment is a Progress Track ranging from 0 to 15. When the sneaking party manages to avoid suspicion or draw attention away from themselves, concealment increases, while when they raise suspicions or perform actions to make them more noticeable, concealment decreases—when concealment reaches zero, the target is **Discovered**. Concealment most often changes as the result of opposed Concealment Rolls (pg 47) or as a consequence for Failure (pg 18). The GM may also decide that some actions automatically adjust the concealment track (or end it altogether!).

The concealment levels correspond to different levels of attention from the seeking party:

UNAWARE (CONCEALMENT 11+)

The seeker is not paying attention to the hider, either because they are unaware of the hider or are looking in the wrong place (e.g. a guard or bouncer on a slow night, an executive expecting someone to try and talk their target out of a deal, or an investigator with no suspects).

SUSPICIOUS (CONCEALMENT 6-10)

The seeker is not alerted to the hider, but is on alert for some troubles (e.g. a guard who's heard some suspicious noises, a partier who thinks a party crasher might not fit in, or an investigator with some clues pointing towards the perpetrator).

ALERTED (CONCEALMENT 1-5)

The seeker is aware of the hider, but not exactly where they are or what they're doing (e.g. a guard who's spotted the PCs but has lost sight of them, an executive who know the PCs are here under false pretenses but not why they're here, or an investigator who thinks the PCs are their prime suspects but can't prove it). An alerted character will generally take immediate actions to try and uncover the hider if they can, though the hider still has a chance to throw them off the trail. In many cases, a seeker becoming alerted may cause the scene to switch to a cinematic if it was not already.

DISCOVERED (CONCEALMENT 0)

The seeker has discovered the hider and what they're up to (e.g. a guard watching the PCs, a socialite aware of who the PCs are and why they are at the ball, an investigator has solved the case). Depending on the situation, this may immediately lead to a new scene or cinematic (as the seeker confronts the hider) or otherwise trigger consequences for the hider being discovered.

Concealment Rolls

The primary method of changing concealment is the **Concealment Roll**—an opposed roll of the hider and the seeker as they aim to hide themselves from detection or find the opposing party respectively. What exactly a concealment roll is depends on the situation, some examples are below:

- **Avoiding detection:** Physicality (hider) vs Observation (seeker)
- **Blending in:** Deception or Appropriate Skill (hider) vs Observation (seeker)
- **Tailing a vehicle:** Piloting (hider) vs Observation (seeker)
- **Hacking a system:** Tech vs Tech
- **Avoiding leaving forensic evidence behind:** Science or Physicality (hider) vs Observation (seeker)

Characters make a concealment roll in the following conditions:

- A Concealment Track is established, representing the initial opportunity to detect or avoid notice.
- Either side encounters a substantial obstacle in their goal (e.g. a group sneaking in gets within range of a new set of more attentive guards, or a seeking group is forced to follow their target into a crowded mall).
- Either side performs an action that enables a substantial new opportunity to be detected (e.g. a player investigates the room their target is hiding in, or a character engages in a risky action).

On a success, the winner of the roll moves the concealment Progress Track 5 points in their favor (to a maximum of 15).

If one side is distracted, preoccupied, or otherwise not actively attempting to find or hide, the concealment roll becomes an unopposed roll against an appropriate defense (usually Vigilance), and the distracted side doesn't make progress on the roll (as per normal for non-opposed Progress Tracks), though the GM may still decide that concealment decreases as a complication for Failure (see "Failure" on pg 18).

When multiple characters are hiding they make a Group Test (pg 20); if they are seeking, they make a Teamwork Test (pg 20) (the average result matters when hiding, the best result matters when seeking—though the GM may sometimes modify this based on situations).

Designing Stealth Scenes

Concealment rolls exist to capture the dramatic tension in a stealth scene where a series of obstacles, complications, or challenges occur, forcing the protagonists to deal with them to avoid discovery (or discover their target, as the case may be), and to allow temporary failures without immediately ending the attempt.

If the players are better than their adversary, losses of concealment will usually be able to be fixed with the Hide action, as players work to overcome a temporary setback. If the adversary equals or outmatches them, this becomes risky—making concealment closer to a ticking clock to achieve their goal before inevitable discovery!

Initial Concealment

When the GM decides that a concealment track is appropriate, they begin by determining the initial value of concealment. The initial value of concealment is primarily a measure of how closely the seeker is paying attention to the hider, and is usually between 10 and 15, though if the seeker begins with strong reason to be suspicious or close to discovering the hider it may begin lower. The hider and seeker then make an immediate concealment roll, adjusting concealment as per normal. If a character has used the **Prepare for Trouble** Downtime Action (see pg 37), this applies after the initial concealment roll (and can cause the concealment to go above the normal maximum of 15).

*Example: Ari is attempting to sneak into city hall to steal some records. The GM decides the guard on duty isn't suspecting anything, so the initial level of Concealment is concealment 12 (***Unaware***). Ari rolls a 12, however, the guard rolls a 14—a Failure. As Ari starts trying to break into the building, the guard spots some movement on one of the security cameras, and now the concealment track is at 7 (***Suspicious***).*

Concealment Actions

The following actions are available to characters to attempt to move the concealment track in the direction of their choice.

HIDE/SEEK

Hider and Seeker. Main Action

The character makes a move to change what they're doing in an attempt to improve their concealment (Hide) or detect their target (Seek). Make an immediate Concealment roll—on a success their approach achieves the desired end, whereas on a Failure it backfires, further exposing them or bringing their search away from their desired target.

DIVERT

Ally of Hider. Main Action

A character jeopardizes their own Concealment to make a distraction for an ally. Make a concealment roll—on a success, they increase concealment by 5. On a Failure, they become immediately discovered, though their undiscovered ally's Concealment is unaffected.

SET TRAP

Seeker. Main Action

The Seeker takes some action to attempt to flush out the hider. The Seeker makes a roll vs the highest Vigilance of the hiders. On a success, the hiders take a -5 on their next roll related to the trap the Seeker set.

TAKE OUT

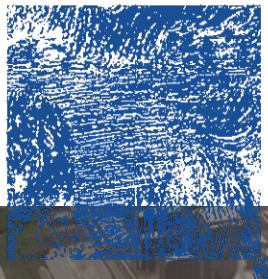
Hider. Main Action

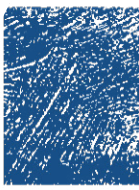
If the player can, by use of other means, take out a witness that is onto them, shut down a camera tracking them, etc., they can increase their concealment. If any loss of concealment was caused solely by a single observer (such as a single guard or a single camera) that hasn't yet alerted others, simply reverse that concealment loss on a success. If other characters or measures have been alerted, increase concealment by 3.

SWITCHING APPROACHES

Hider. Main Action

Sometimes a stealthy infiltration switches to a social infiltration, or tailing someone by car switches to tailing them by foot. In this case, make an immediate concealment roll with the new skill. GMs may apply penalties to this based on circumstances or decide it's impossible: you're going to stand out at a black tie formal if you're dressed in a stealth suit, and it's hard to sneak away when you've spent all evening on stage in a bright sequined jump suit.





Example: Ari is continuing to break into city hall. The GM decides that the guard is investigating what they saw on the camera and goes over to look—a Seek action. The GM makes a Concealment roll on behalf of the guard, rolling their Observation, and gets a 9. Ari rolls physicality to hide under a desk—and gets a 14—a Dynamic success. Ari moves the concealment track 10 in their preferred direction: up from 7 to the maximum of 15. The guard goes away, assuming the camera was just someone outside looking in the window.

Ari continues moving through the building and gets to the records room. They attempt to pick the lock, rolling Physicality against a TN of 12. Ari rolls an 8—a Failure. The GM picks a 3 point shift of Concealment as the complication and says that Ari triggers an alarm, reducing Concealment back to 12. Ari tries again and succeeds, ducking into the records room. The GM decides that the records room has higher security, and therefore calls for another concealment roll for Ari. Ari rolls an 8, while the guard rolls a 13—another Dynamic success, reducing the concealment to 3. The guard spots Ari on the camera and starts running towards the records room. Ari grabs the records before hearing the guard fumble at the door. Ari spots a large crate and decides to hide in there—taking the Hide action. He makes an opposed roll against the guard and succeeds, 11 to 9, raising concealment to 8. As the guard searches the room, he fails to check the crate and eventually goes back to check the surrounding hallways. Ari decides to stop hiding and sneak out—the GM has him make one more Hide Roll—another success, raising concealment back to 13. Ari gets out of the area the guard is searching, Ari manages to make it out of city hall, records in hand.

Concealment and Multiple NPCs

In theory, every character could have their own Concealment track, and these could be different for each other character looking for them. This would quickly get out of hand! As a general rule, GMs should use one concealment track to represent the overall stance of all hiding characters and those pursuing them, unless the party has split up on completely independent approaches (e.g. half the party is infiltrating the party as guests while the other half is breaking in stealthily). If multiple independent opponents are at play, generally we recommend only tracking the lowest relevant concealment track—everyone else is a less pressing and dangerous issue. If it becomes necessary to track a different NPC, the GM can switch focus to them, picking a concealment that make sense (but usually higher than the previous target)

Sometimes a second NPC is particularly important, or independent of the primary NPC—in that case it might make sense to track them separately, even if they are less of an immediate threat.

HIDING THINGS

Sometimes, it isn't yourself that you are trying to keep hidden. This could be shoving a weapon in your clothing or putting evidence in a secure place. In cases where you are trying to hide or conceal items, roll Wit + Deception, then add 10. This is the TN for NPCs to discover the item if they are looking for it. Concealing an item requires at least one minute of careful effort.

Breaching

The advent of Cybertech, a catch-all term for the recent advances which extended and expanded the computing power of technological devices by leaps and bounds, has made a profound impact on the modern world. Cybertech pervades almost every element of modern life. Computers control everything from locks to vehicles, and almost everything you might want to know is in digital form, from magical lore to corporate secrets. Given its importance, security is tight on cybertech, but it's not impregnable—at least to breachers with the right gear.

SECURITY RATING, FIREWALLS AND RANGE

Three elements determine the security of a cybertech system or device, the **Security Rating**, the **Firewall**, and the **Range**.

Range

The first line of defense is the **Range** of a system—or from where it can be accessed. By careful measurements of the time it takes for a signal to get from a user to the system and back, systems can prevent access by anyone outside of a certain distance. While nominally range may be set to any distance, typically ranges are set at one of these bands:

- **Touch (T)** systems must be directly plugged into by someone in immediate proximity
- **Short-ranged (S)** systems are accessible wirelessly within 10m
- **Medium-ranged (M)** systems are accessible within 50m
- **Long-ranged (L)** systems are accessible within 1000m
- **Global (G)** systems are accessible globally.

The range of a system can be controlled by anyone with authorized access to the system using the Change Range Action.

Cybertech Range is most commonly used to limit wireless access to devices to people nearby or prevent a device from being accessed wirelessly. Some systems are incapable of being used at certain ranges; this will be specified in their description.

Security Rating

The **Security Rating** of a device determines the TN to breach a device, representing the strength of its defenses or other factors that make it harder for enemy breachers to affect. The Security Rating of a device may be improved by a defending breacher using Active Defense (see below).

ACTIVE DEFENSE

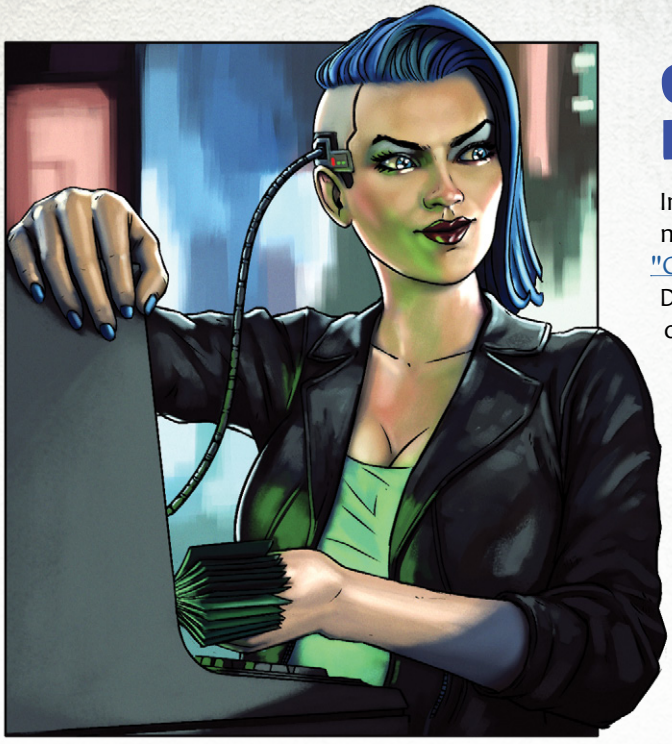
Backup Action

With attention, a talented breacher can improve the Security Rating of a system they own or have authorized access to. Roll Tech—if the result of the roll is higher than the Security Rating of any device the character is an Authorized User for and within range of (see below), increase the Security Rating to the value of the result until the end of your next turn.

Firewall

Firewall is a Progress Track (like Health or Animity) that represents the progress a breacher has made against the system of redundant security measures designed to prevent unauthorized access, providing opportunities to alert the owner of an attempted intrusion before the system becomes fully compromised. A system with a firewall is not compromised until the breacher reduces the firewall to zero. Once the firewall is reduced to zero (or if the breacher succeeds against a system without a firewall), the breacher has full access to the system and is able to do anything an Authorized User could do. Firewall recovers at a rate of one per hour.

Progress on a Firewall track is shared among any collaborating breachers (but not among breachers who aren't co-operating with each other—make a separate track if the progress of two unaffiliated breachers becomes relevant).



Cyberkits

In order to beat security, a specialized piece of cyberware called a cyberkit is necessary. In addition to Firewall and Security Rating, each cyberkit has two additional attributes: **Slicing** and **Breach Power**. Each point of **Slicing** gives +1d6 on all Tech rolls to breach. **Breach Power** provides **Augment** equal to its value on all breaching rolls (including rolls to bypass firewall or detect a hidden device).

Gaining Access

In order to gain access to a system, a breacher with a cyberkit makes a **Breaching Roll**, rolling a Tech roll (modified by the slicing of their cyberkit) vs the Security Rating of the system or device. On a success, they decrease the firewall of the targeted system by 5 (modified by the Breach Power of their cyberkit). If the firewall is reduced to zero (or the system or device has no firewall), the breacher has compromised the system and they may do anything an Authorized User of the system could do.

Concealment and Breaching Rolls

In order to make a breaching roll against a target, it must be **Discovered** (Concealment 0) to you (see "Concealment" on pg 46). You automatically Discover any system you know the physical location of, as well as any system that makes itself known (which is most consumer devices, though anyone may put their devices in privacy mode to avoid detection). All other devices (and those in private mode) begin with concealment 10, though some abilities may increase that.

You may attempt a Concealment Roll (see pg 47) to find a specific device or system that you can identify (even vaguely—for example you can look for the nearest hidden device to a given point). If the target device is unattended this is a Tech roll against its Security Rating, with each success reducing concealment by 5. You can also attempt to find a device by using the Trace Access action (see below) on a device or system you know they're using. If the user is actively attempting to evade notice, use opposed Tech tests. This applies in reverse as well—if you're breaching a system any security begins with a Concealment of 10 against you, though a Failure may result in decrease in concealment (see "Failure" on pg 18), and possibly trigger efforts by opposing breachers to find you.

You can only detect devices within range: you cannot detect a device or system if is not within your range or if you are outside of its range.

Authorized Actions

Authorized actions are everything you can do once you've successfully gained access (by succeeding on a breaching roll and depleting the firewall), or because you're the legitimate user of the device. Unless otherwise specified, all Authorized actions are Main Actions.

Control Device

You may operate the device and use any of its normal functions. Alternatively, you may interfere with its normal operation. If you interfere with its usage, any attempts to use it gain 2 instances of Dulled. The GM may require Deception rolls when impersonating the normal operator of the device, or any other skill when determining how well the device is used (as per normal use of the device).

COPY IDENTITY
You may copy the files identifying the device to another device with a Tech roll with a TN equal to the Security Rating of the Device +5. On success, you gain all digital access that the original device had—you can do whatever they can, and become an Authorized User for all devices they were (though you are still subject to any restrictions on range).

COPY/EDIT FILES
Data is the mainstay of devices and systems, ranging from location data, communications, camera information, sensitive documents, and more. Exactly what this action can do depends on the function of the device, but this action covers everything from geotracking a device, listening in on conversations, wiping or stealing incriminating information, and more (use your imagination!). As a Main Action, a user may copy data to and from any device or system they have access to, or delete or edit any data on that device. GM may require multiple actions for elaborate edits, or a Deception roll to edit data to fool another user of the system (e.g. looping camera feeds or falsifying authorization or IDs).

CHANGE RANGE
A user may change the range of the device, either restricting access to users nearby or allowing users from further away to access the device

DISABLE DEVICE
A user may turn the device off, or optionally render it inoperable until repaired. To render a device inoperable, make a Tech roll, your result becomes the TN to repair it. A repair attempt takes 10 minutes. A character may attempt to repair a device as a Downtime Action, gaining a +5 on the roll.

GRANT ACCESS
You may make any other user an Authorized User of the device or system. You may limit what Authorized Actions the other user may take (for example forbidding them from revoking access or changing range) but this is risky—if the user makes a breaching roll against the system to gain full access, they ignore the Firewall of the system. Once granted, access lasts until revoked by an Authorized User (see Revoke Access, below).

A breacher may use the Grant Access action on themselves to create a hidden back door that they can access later. Roll Tech—this becomes the TN for another user to detect the back door (once detected, it can be removed with Revoke Access as normal).

REVOKE ACCESS
You may revoke the access of an Authorized User. If they are not currently using the device or system this happens automatically, otherwise you must succeed on an opposed Tech roll against the target. Revoke access has no effect against a breacher who has reduced the firewall of the device to zero.

TRACE ACCESS
Roll Tech. Anyone who has used or breached the system in the last hour decreases their concealment to you by 5 if they are within range, provided their Security Rating is less than your result. If they are out of range (for example they have switched their device to T range), you instead learn the last location they accessed the device from.

DEVICES IN THE WORLD

HALOS
Halos, short for Handheld Link Organizers, are the most common device in the world—only the poor, imprisoned, or those actively shunning society are without. For everyone else, halos are what links them to the rest of the world. Governments like Neo Babylon expect people to keep a copy of their ID on them at all times, and it's how most people do everything from making payments to unlocking doors.

THE INTERFACE
Interacting with a Halo, like most things in Neo Babylon, depend on how much money you spend.

Cheap halos, known colloquially as paylos and typically worn as bracers, rely on cheap integrated touch screens and buttons to interface with them. While those forced to rely on them are able to perform most vital tasks a person needs, they're often awkward, both ergonomically and because other devices assume an augmented reality interface, and the support for a screen can be awkward and buggy.

The most common halo form factor is worn on the head (hence the backronym), and operated via AR. Visual input is handled via wireless connection to smart glasses or contacts, or via Eyedrops, tiny cybertech devices that rest above and below the eye and stimulate the retina to overlay images. Sound is covered by speakers on the halo or miniaturized earbuds. Images and objects are able to be manipulated via hand gestures, tracked by sensors on the halo.

The most seamless digital experience however, occurs with cybernetic implants. Cyber eyes and cyber ears allow completely immersive sensory experiences, providing not only better resolution than other methods, but also enabling a seamless integration of digital and reality, while datajacks bypass the need to make any movements to interact with the device at all, as the user learns to simply imagine manipulating objects to interact with the world.

ACCESS SECURITY

Using most halos requires a combination of biometric data (usually a fingerprint or iris scan) and a password. Forging biometric data requires some method of getting the biometric data of the user and a Deception Test with a TN equal to the Security Rating of the device. Each attempt takes 30 minutes to create an appropriate physical model of the user. The biometric data and password are obtained upon breaching a halo (though at that point it may be redundant!).

Halos can be set to only be used with a datajack, in which case they are keyed to the neural signature of the user. This cannot be forged, meaning breaching is the only method to gain control of a halo or cyberkit from most users with a datajack.

CONNECTING TO THE WORLD

While many people have a wide number of cybertech devices on (or in!) their person, covering everything from headphones to bio-monitors to smart clothing, the halo is unique in that it's typically the only device that directly interfaces with the rest of the world, serving as the hub for everything else on their person (which typically are set to a Range of T, to avoid being directly hacked).

Because of its privileged role as hub and link to the rest of the world, the halo also is the store of digital identity for the user. Each halo stores cryptographic keys that allow other devices to recognize that user and determine if they are authorized for access. If a breacher gains access to a halo, they can gain access to those keys, allowing them to act as if they were that user for all intents and purposes (see "Copy Identity" on pg 52).

The dangers of a breached halo limit some of what is able to be done on the cybernet. Most banks have transaction limits on halo initiated transactions, requiring either some form of non-digital verification for larger purchases or at least a verification period where a breached user has time to reverse the transaction without losing money. Secure systems and servers rely on range restrictions to ensure that anyone nearby has also passed through physical security, or rely on control from designated wired terminals who are the only Authorized Users, preventing a remote breacher from stealing their credentials. Of course, all bets are off if a breacher gets physical access to one of these terminals...

CYBERKITS

The modern computer system was designed to be unbreachable, and by and large this is true for any legal consumer device.

That leaves breachers to rely on cyberkits, specialty cyberware that exploits dedicated hardware, illegal programs, and a direct connection to the breacher's brain to bypass the security of the system. While the original breachers were independent researchers and criminals interested in breaking the system, corporations and governments quickly found the need to hire their own breachers to secure their systems from other breachers (and spy on rebels, criminals, and each other).

A cyberkit can do everything a user with a Halo can do, but can additionally perform Exploits and make Breaching Rolls, allowing them to gain access to a system without being explicitly authorized.

SERVERS

Even the highest end Halos can be compromised by a decent breacher. For corporations, governments, banks, and anyone else who wants higher security, there are servers. Servers range from the size of a briefcase to the size of a small warehouse, depending on the data, security, computational needs, and of course, wealth, of their owner.

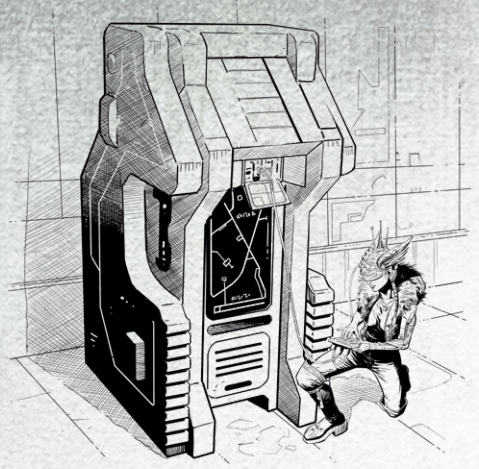
Most servers are designed to be accessed remotely, having a range of Global, though some high security servers are only accessible from within their building, or through hard wires. Servers have higher firewall and Security Rating than links, and major servers have dedicated breachers manning wired terminals ready to jump in if anyone trips any alarms in order to locate breachers, undo their damage, and, if necessary, decrease the range of the server such that they can no longer be remotely breached.

ACTIVE COUNTERMEASURES

Some servers have active countermeasures: programs running that automatically target the Firewall of breachers targeting them. There are three main types of active countermeasures:

INTRUSIVE COUNTERMEASURES (IC)

On a failed breaching roll targeting the server, the breacher rolls a number of d6 equal to the IC rating, and decreases their firewall by that amount.



OBSERVANT COUNTERMEASURES (OC)

On a failed breaching roll targeting the server, the target loses concealment against the server and any approved breachers equal to the rating of the OC.

PAYLOAD COUNTERMEASURES (PC):

While some servers rely on their own breachers to ultimately deal with intruders, most servers have a payload, or specific code that is triggered when a breacher fails a breaching roll against the server and their firewall is zero. White hat breachers are often creative with this code, but below are some common payloads:

- The attacking breacher immediately sends their location to the server and designated defensive breachers.
- The attacking breacher's device has its software scrambled and forced to shut down, making it inoperable as per the Disable Device Authorized Action.
- The server and any breachers designated by its programming are immediately made Authorized Users on the attacking cyberkit.
- The attacking breacher is rerouted to a virtual machine with fake data and simulated IC and breachers, requiring the breacher to reduce a new concealment track to zero to recognize the shift.
- The attacking breacher's device performs any specified series of Authorized Actions.

Surveillance

Surveillance in Neo Babylon is omnipresent. Drones and vehicles fill the streets and skies, each with their own sets of sensors. Every storefront has an array of cameras, both for security and to inform interactive advertisements and displays for people walking by. If that wasn't enough, most people in Neo Babylon have Halos able to see and hear what's happening around them, or failing that cyber eyes and ears able to do so with even greater acuity.

Fortunately, most of these systems are highly local and don't talk to each other, and the sheer scale of information lends some bare semblance of anonymity as long as you don't draw too much attention to yourself. Still, a dedicated breacher (or a Lawjack or Watchdog able to request footage) can almost always find evidence of what's going on—at least as long as a breacher hasn't hacked the system already.

Surveillance systems are usually tied to a hub, either a personal Halo of the owner or security guard or a small server. Security conscience security systems set their range to the minimum required to access this hub, limiting access to breachers who are nearby (and ideally able to be spotted by the security system)—though more casual security setups may allow their owner (and breachers) to access the cameras even while they are across the city. Once a breacher gets within range, they can breach the sensors and erase or loop their feeds. If the breacher instead targets the hub, they can get access to all the feeds—and erase any previous footage.

C-Links

C-links (referred to as clinks), are the omnipresent vending machines of Neo Babylon. Rather than store inventory on hand, inside each C-link is a small micro-fabrication plant that can produce almost anything you can imagine making out of plastic, wires, and a handful of standardized motors, springs, and other components. While of inferior quality to goods produced in dedicated factories, creative designers and engineers (both official corporate ones and a thriving counterculture of breachers happy to hack them) have made it possible to get almost every necessity from a C-link—and for many of lower castes, almost everything they own might be from a C-link.

A C-link typically can produce goods at a rate of 1 Fortune per hour, and C-links are usually stocked with enough supplies to create up to 5 Fortune of goods. In the upper city, Lawjacks often patrol C-links to make sure no one is breaching them to make contraband—in the undercity the occasional breacher is a cost of doing business to extract what remaining resources have trickled down there.

Cyberware

Cyberware started as attempts to restore function to amputees and other grievous injuries, and quickly developed to enable the replacement of many parts of the body with technological prosthetics that are more capable than the biology they're replacing. Given the existence of breachers, most people keep their ware at range T, only accessible via a hidden port or ultra-low range communication that allows access to a link directly touching their body. The exception, of course are sensory implants—there's no point getting your eyes ripped out for top of the line augmented reality if you can't actually get the data for augmented reality. Similarly, if the goal is to share what you're seeing with a friend hiding around the corner, you need to connect at a range higher than T.

Chases

Chases are just like other cinematics. Initiative determines turn order, and each character gets Main Actions and Backup Actions as normal.

Progress Tracks

When a chase begins, each side gains a Progress Track (referred to as the Escape Track and the Pursuit Track respectively). By default each track requires 15 progress to finish, though the GM may alter this for shorter or longer chases.

To make progress on either track, characters may take the Major Move (pg 33) action to make a Physicality (if on foot) or Piloting (if in a vehicle) Test against a TN of 12 + the highest rank in the relevant skill among their opponents. The GM may modify this if one side has any miscellaneous advantages or disadvantages (such as difficult terrain, home turf, friendly bystanders, etc.). If there are more than one characters on a side in a chase, only one character can make progress on their side's track each Round (use the highest progress in the case of multiple attempts).

Additional Characters Fleeing

For each additional character or vehicle (beyond 1) fleeing, the pursuers add a **Bonus Track** (see pg 21) of length 5 to the Pursuit Track. Upon completing the initial track, the pursuers catch one character of their choice. For each Bonus Track they complete before the escaping side completes their track, they catch up to one additional character.

Head Starts

If the side fleeing has a head start: add 5 to the pursuit track if those fleeing are at short range, add 10 if those fleeing are at medium range, and add 20 if those fleeing are at long range.

Speed

Speed represents how fast a character or vehicle is going. By default, a character's Speed is zero, though many vehicles and some individuals and creatures have the ability to go much faster (see "Speed" on pg 112). A character increases all progress they make, and reduces all progress against them by their Speed. A character can increase their Speed by one, up to their maximum Speed each turn as part of taking a Major Move (pg 33) action. The GM may decide that some terrain effectively limits the safe Speed of a vehicle (this may be affected by the size of the vehicle). For each point of Speed a character is going above the safe Speed, they roll one less die on their Test, and on a Dynamic Failure they may crash!

A character who does not take the Minor Move (pg 34) action each turn reduces their Speed to zero (A character who makes the Major Move action is counted as taking the Minor Move action)

Speed Value	Speed/ Example	Max Speed in this terrain...
0	10 mph (15 kph): Human Running	A packed crowd (foot) or traffic jam (vehicle)
1	15 mph (25 kph): Average Human Sprinting	A typical room with objects in it (foot), packed traffic (vehicle)
2	20 mph (30 kph): Athlete Sprinting	A narrow alley, or dense traffic (vehicle)
3	30 mph (50 kph): Heavy Vehicles	Downtown Neo Babylon during the day
4	45 mph (70 kph): Electric Bikes	Downtown Neo Babylon at Night, Light Residential Area
5	70 mph (110 kph): Most Cars	Freeway traffic
+1	Increase top Speed by 50%	-

Using Other Skills

Characters may use other skills in chases. Broadly speaking, these fall into three categories:

- An ability that is directly likely to affect the chase with it's normal effects (e.g. breaching or shooting an opponents vehicle to stop them). In this case resolve the effect as per normal.
- An attempt to use a skill other than Physicality or Piloting to make Progress (e.g. a Baru of Nature attempting to summon winds to support a sailboat). Allow creative substitutions in skills, likely at a penalty (see "When all you have is a hammer..." on pg 22).
- An attempt to use a skill to hinder a specific opponent or opponents. Target an appropriate defense (modified by the GM if desired). On a success, increase the TN for that character by 2 to make progress on a chase track.

Ending a Chase

A chase ends when one side reaches the progress goal. If there is more than 1 person fleeing, each goal reached (including bonus goals) counts as 1 person escaped or caught.

Now What?

When one side has caught up to other, they have closed to their preferred range and cornered or otherwise gained such an advantage that the other side can't make any progress in escaping, at least immediately. Often this will lead to another scene (for example a social confrontation or a combat). Sometimes however, upon catching up their targets, the pursuers will be unable or unwilling to prevent them from continuing to attempt to escape. As long as the pursuers attempt pursuit, they automatically keep pace with their quarry as long as the situation remains similar. If the situation changes in their favor (perhaps the quarry's breacher disables the pursuer's car, or an ally provides a distraction), the erstwhile escapee may attempt to escape again, though their opponent's pursuit track starts at one third the normal value.

Combat

Given the consequential nature of violence, there are some particular rules that come into play when a cinematic involves combat. In addition to the general cinematic rules (see "Cinematics" on pg 31), the following rules exist for combat scenes.

COMBAT ACTIONS

MELEE ATTACK

Main Action

Roll Melee Combat vs. Guard of an opponent within Touch (T) range. If successful, target loses Health based on the damage of the weapon you use.

RANGED ATTACK

Main Action

Roll Ranged Combat vs. Guard of an opponent within range of a ranged weapon you're wielding. If successful, do damage based on damage of that weapon.

GRAPPLE

Main Action

You attempt to physically restrain an opponent. As a Main Action, make a Melee Combat Test vs the Guard of a target with T range. If successful, they are grappled. While grappled, targets have +1 consequence and cannot take actions to move. A grappled opponent can break free, as Main Action, on their turn, if they are successful in an opposed Test using Melee Combat or physicality versus the grappler's physicality.

DE-ESCALATE

Main Action

You attempt to stop the combat by using your words instead of weapons. Determine the starting Ask (see "Asks" on pg 44) to convince the enemy to stop fighting based on the enemy's perceived odds of success (see table below). If the Ask is below the target's Regard (see "Regard" on pg 42) they will stop fighting for as long as you are talking to them and they are not being attacked by you or your allies. If the Ask is above the target's Regard, you may roll Influence vs. Vigilance of the target. On a Success, decrease the value of the Ask by 5. If the fight shifts in favor of one side or another during the course of the attempt to de-escalate, alter the Ask appropriately.

De-escalating pauses the combat only as long as you continue to talk to them, though it may lead to an agreement to walk away (or surrender). If it becomes clear that a nonviolent resolution is impossible after each side has tried to persuade each other, combat will resume.

This is a special case of the convince action (see pg 44). Any abilities that apply to convince also apply to de-escalate.

Starting Ask*	Combat Situation
-15	Enemy has no hope of victory
-10	Enemy seems likely to lose fight
-5	Victory is uncertain
0	Enemy seems likely to win fight
5	Enemy is almost certain to win fight

* The GM may increase the value of the Ask to make deescalation harder if the fight has important stakes for the NPC's Values or goals, and decrease the value of the Ask if the NPC has reasons to be inclined to de-escalate.

CONCEDE

Main Action

You attempt to end the combat by surrendering or otherwise refusing to fight. Make an Influence (if being honest) or Deception (if being dishonest) Test against the target's Vigilance. Gain a +5 bonus on this roll if you take clear actions to surrender or disadvantage yourself (such as disarming yourself or allowing yourself to be restrained)—the GM may waive the roll if the attempt to concede is particularly clear and compelling. On a success the enemy ceases to attack you for as long as you do not resist any attempts to restrain or disarm you and take no action against them.

If an enemy attacks you after you have conceded, you may make another Test against their Vigilance. On a success, they take 5 Animity damage.

WEAPONS AND DAMAGE

Most of the time when a character makes a melee or ranged attack, they will be doing so with a weapon. Ranged attacks cannot be made without a weapon, but melee attacks can be made unarmed. The damage for an unarmed attack is 1d6 + the Brawn attribute of the attacker. For all other weapons, the damage they inflict is listed in their description in the weapons section of the gear chapter (see "Weapons" on pg 108).

DAMAGE TYPES

Some types of damage have special effects.

VULNERABILITY

Some targets are listed as having a vulnerability to specific types of damage. A creature with a vulnerability to a damage type takes twice as much damage from that type.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

Physical damage covers all damage caused by bludgeoning, cutting, concussive blasts and the like. By far the most common type of damage, Physical damage is applied to Health and has no other effects besides damage. Unless otherwise specified, damage is considered physical damage.

CORROSIVE DAMAGE

Corrosive damage can degrade the structural integrity of its target. Whenever a target takes corrosive damage, they decrease the value of their Armor by one until the Armor is repaired.

Some abilities degrade protection even more so—if an ability is described as Corrosive (X) each attack decreases Armor by the value of X.

ELECTRICAL DAMAGE

Damage from electricity can trigger spasms and overload electronic devices. Whenever a character takes electrical damage, they gain an instance of Dulled (pg 18) until the end of their next turn.

Some electrical attacks are even more disruptive—if an ability is described as Electrical (X) damaged targets gain a number instances of Dulled equal to the value X.

FIRE DAMAGE

Fire damage can cause secondary fires, leading to lingering damage. For each 6 rolled on the damage dice for fire damage, the target gains the Burning Keyword (or increases it's value by 1).

Some fire attacks are particularly effective at starting fires—if an ability is described as Fire (X) increase the value of burning of any target affected by the attack by the value of X.

BURNING

When a target has the burning keyword, they take a number of dice of fire damage at the end of their turn equal to the value of their burning keyword (sixes rolled on this damage increase the value of burning as per normal). If a target takes no damage from the burning keyword, the effect ends. A character may also end the burning keyword on themselves or a target in **T** range by taking a Main Action to put out the fire.

METABOLIC DAMAGE

Metabolic damage is damage caused by poisons or other effects that directly interfere with the functioning of individual cells. Metabolic damage ignores all normal Armor, though some life support systems protect from metabolic damage. Metabolic damage does not affect nonliving targets or targets without a normal metabolism, such as objects, vehicles, or most spirits.

UNIQUE DAMAGE TYPES

Some rarer damage types are listed by a unique type. These types have no specific effect rather than flavor and what types of special Armor affect them. Some examples:

- **Cold:** Damage done from cold environments or cryogenic fluids
- **Radiant:** Damage done by lasers or bright light
- **Radiation:** Damage from radioactive materials

ARMOR

When a character is wearing Armor, reduce any Health damage from each attack by the Armor's rating. If a weapon has an **Armor Penetration** rating (AP), this will negate Armor ratings on a 1 to 1 basis.

Ex: if a character is struck by a weapon dealing 5 damage, but has 5 Armor, the character takes 0 damage. If that character is struck by a weapon dealing 5 damage with 3 AP, but has 5 Armor, the character takes 3 damage, as 3 of their 5 Armor was mitigated by the AP of the attack.

DAMAGE TYPES AND ARMOR

By default Armor applies to all damage types (except Metabolic), however, some types of Armor apply only to specific types of damage (for example, an ability that gives Fire Armor +5 gives 5 armor only against attacks with fire damage).

Damage to Objects

Unless specifically targeted by a character, damage to objects is considered to be incidental, and repairs and replacement happen as part of maintaining lifestyle. Sometimes, however, a character will decide to specifically target an object (e.g. attempting to disable a vehicle to prevent escape, destroying a Halo with incriminating evidence on it, etc.).

When targeting an object, use the Guard of the character carrying it, if applicable, or TN 10 (if unattended). The GM should apply modifiers based on the size of the target (see table below)—it's easier to shoot.

When an object takes enough damage to reduce its health below half, it becomes **Damaged**. Damaged gear becomes difficult to use, applying two instances of Dulled on any tests using the gear. If the object's Health is reduced to zero, it becomes **Inoperable**, and cannot be used at all for its intended purpose.

Repairing Damage

A Damaged or Inoperable object can be repaired as a Downtime Action (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36).

Object Category	Modifier to Guard	Default Health†
Small concealable object (e.g. micro-link)	+5	1
Handheld object (e.g. knife or Halo)	+3	5
Large carried object (e.g. briefcase or shield)	+1	10
Human sized object	+0	15
Vehicle	- Vehicle Size	As per vehicle description

† Weapons, armor, and other gear designed to take a beating have Armor 5 against all damage.

Magic

Magic has been synonymous with power since before recorded history, and since then, those who could most effectively wield it have leveraged their abilities into wealth and political control. Only recently, with the advent of cybertech, has magic's hold on society begun to wane—though even now many corporate boards are full of mages leveraging their old power and wealth.

Each of the three known paths to magical power interacts with different aspects of the world, and each brings their own special rules, abilities and limitations.

Arcane Magic is the magic of forces and energy. Arcane spell-casters describe their art as evoking scales of ethereal music, with each pattern either absorbing energy in the world and turning it into pure mana, or calling on mana to unleash energy in the world. While the basic principle is the same for different types of energy, be it heat, force, electricity, chemistry, or light, different energies require different scales, and most users of arcane magic specialize in one area or another (though almost all have some mastery of the direct manipulation of mana itself). Mages use arcane magic to soar through the sky, create illusions, call forth deadly blasts of fire, or manipulate the chemistry inside living things.

The heights of arcane knowledge rest in the tomes of the great universities of Neo Babylon, where many of the greatest mages train. This knowledge enabled the wonders (and atrocities) Neo Babylon used to dominate the world. Not all arcane spell-casters are collegiate trained—gutter witches, through intuition and scraps of uncovered lore, also sing the songs of arcane magic for their own ends and those of their communities.

Sublime Magic is the magic of affinity. Through careful meditation, sublime practitioners focus on traits and aspects of the world, and by doing so, embody them. Sublime magic is fundamentally a magic of the self, or as many practitioners describe it, a magic of becoming.

The most prominent sublime practitioners are found in the monasteries of the Yojin, who focus on taking on the ways of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, or Void, both physically and metaphorically. By becoming like their object of meditation, Yojin are capable of supernatural feats of physical skill, and the most powerful of Yojin can become one with their element of focus. While Yojin are the most prominent, other sublime practitioners exist, using their power to gain affinity to other aspects of the world. It is believed that many magical beasts channel a form of sublime magic, granting them their particular abilities.

Sacred Magic is the magic of concepts. For many sacred practitioners, it is clear that their relationship with the powers of the world empowers them as they embody ideals, gaining the powers of their deities because of their faith. Some minority theologians suggest the powers are nothing more than ideas themselves, albeit personified, and that speaking of a relationship with these powers is like speaking of a relationship with a waterfall. Regardless of their source, Sacred practitioners, sometimes called Chosen or Disciples, describe their magic as flashes of insight as they reach into the source of their power, willing an instantiation of their ideal in the world. This insight exerts a psychic toll on the practitioner; however, through careful practice sacred practitioners learn to protect themselves from the cost of magic through prayer, mantras, or philosophy.

The most prominent sacred practitioners are the Baru, who attribute their powers to one of the many gods of the Neo Babylonian pantheon (many of which are syncretized from other faiths as they were colonized and evangelized by the Neo Babylonians), and through worship of the gods, take on and champion one of their ideals. Nonetheless, chosen of many other faiths exist, as well as those who evoke the ideals, consciously or unconsciously, without any worship of a deity at all.

The relationship between the three magics is a matter of much discussion, and despite millennia of hypotheses and theorizing, little is known for sure. They all interact with mana in the world, that much is known, but beyond that it is unclear if they are all manifestations of a single unifying cosmic magic, limited only by the conceptions of mortals, or if each magic instead is a unique and separate force. What is clear, however, is that any individual can only ever practice one type of magic—once an affinity is found, it can never be changed.

A PC can only ever express as one type of caster and use magic in one of these three ways. While this path need not be chosen at character creation, it must be chosen when the PC first takes a magical paradigm, and henceforth all other options are inaccessible.

THE SHINE AND ETHEREAL BEINGS

Those who wield one of the three forms of magic have the ability to sense and interact with ethereal beings in ways that others cannot.

SHINE PERCEPTION

Magic permeates the entire world, but is largely imperceptible. People's minds filter out the subtle impressions ethereal beings and magic leave in their perception, allowing them to focus on more mundane reality. But leave your mind to wander, look for patterns in the nothingness, or attend to the glint in the corner of your eye, and you might catch glimpses of the mana behind it all.

The Shine is the name magic practitioners give to this other layer of reality, imposed onto the physical by the subtle effects mana has on living minds. With practice, one can focus on the impressions left by mana on the mind, creating a perception of the world integrating the material and the magical—producing a world that appears much like ours, but, as many mages have described it, shinier.

Focusing your attention on the Shine is called **Shine Perception** or **Shinesight**. As a Main Action, any character may make a Test using Magic Arts + awareness to look around. The TN to see things in the shine is the higher of 12 or the Aegis of any spirits they might see. If a character is trained in Magic Arts, they can use a backup action to focus on the Shine. Even without focusing on the mana, sometimes characters will notice signs of magical activity influencing their perception of the world—an Observation Test that beats the Shinesight TN by 5 may still notice the presence of magical effects. As Shinesight is not a physical effect but a side effect of the impression mana leaves on living minds, the shine cannot be detected on cameras or other sensors.

Looking at the shine is distracting however, and the character gains Dulled 2 on Observation tests while focusing on the Shine. This lasts until the character takes another Major action to refocus on the material world (or a Backup Action if trained in Magic Arts).

Most spirits do not try to hide themselves in the Shine, but some, particularly malevolent spirits like demons, start out concealed, even with shine perception. Shine perception can also be used to observe things in detail in the Shine. Once spirits have been discovered, they can be directly observed, with or without shine perception, by anyone who has spotted them as long as they remain in sight.

The Soul is the Organ that Sings Magic

Why individuals express an affinity to magic (and why only to one type of magic) is one of the most studied and least understood questions in magic theory. The closest to an accepted answer is that performing magic requires being able to "sing" the right cosmic notes to attract and manipulate the different types of mana, and that not only do different types of mana require vastly different songs that can't be manipulated at the same time, being able to produce such songs requires conditioning your soul in such a distinct way as precludes it from being able to make the other sorts of music.

Some legends tell tales of individuals, often after some traumatic event, that lost their previous power and gained affinity to another type of magic. None of these tales have been confirmed to be more than literary embellishments, though the ability of some trauma to sever magic users from magic lends credence to the first part of the story, at least.

Thats not to say that different types of magic can't interact with each other—mages from the college of mana often work together with Baru to create artifices (see pg 68) capturing sacred magic—a fact anyone saved by a salve of healing is grateful for!

AFFECTING THE ETHEREAL

Spirits that have manifested, appearing in both our world and the Shine, can be touched and interacted with just like non-ethereal beings. Characters, even non-magical ones, may still attempt to interact with an ethereal being, even if they cannot or have not seen it or verified its presence. It is up to the spirit to decide to respond… or not. Casters of magic however, can interact with ethereal beings even if they have not manifested. The three magic sources have abilities that affect ethereal beings directly.

More specifics of how each source of magic interacts with ethereal beings are described in the various magic sections below.

ARCANE MAGIC

"Power forges ore into metal, power raises towers and grinds stone into streets, power pumps water to the crops, and lights the streets against the darkness. Power is civilization—and mana is power."
— Arcanist Ipsuchadurri

Arcane magic is described as a building song, with notes and melodies slowly coming together until the final effect comes together, exerting a specific force on the world. Each type of force has its own "scale": most magicians become more comfortable with some types of spells than others, maintaining expertise in one type of magic above all else and becoming a master of a single "college" of arcane magic. Others, however, learn to harmonize together the different scales into discordant yet beautiful songs that produce effects blending together different forces and energy—at least according to others with the gift to hear them.

Regardless of the type of force, the fundamental effect is the same: the building melody either increases the force, draining mana from the nearby area, or decreases it, coalescing the force into mana.

CASTING ARCANE MAGIC

Arcane magic is used via Arcane paradigms, and thier descriptions detail their use. With the exception of ditties, arcane magic requires taking the **Harmonize** Main Action before the effect can be completed, and often require a Magic Arts Test.

HARMONIZE

Main Action

You gain 1 bar of a mana type of your choice, up to the maximum number of bars you have access to (zero by default, (see "Arcane Magic" on pg 163). You may use that bar to fulfill the prerequisite of any Arcane spell (listed in its description) or to power 1 of its Amps (see below). Each bar lasts until you cast a spell or a turn passes without taking a Harmonize action. Each Harmonize action gives a cumulative +2 on the Magic Arts roll for the final spell.

To observers, harmonizing mana is obvious, as mana around the caster reacts to a mage harmonizing magic, leaving physical effects related to the bar being harmonized. A TN 12 Magic Arts Test (as an Interrupt Action) identifies the type of mana being harmonized.

AMPS

Many spells can be amplified, varying their power or effect. Amplifications of spells, called **Amps**, allow a mage to add extra harmonized mana bars into spells for greater effect. Additionally, The College of Mana has various Amps that can affect other spells.

DITTIES

Ditties are the simplest melodies, and the first bits of arcane magic a witch learns. Unlike other arcane spells, a ditty takes effect immediately and does not require the harmonize action.

SUSTAINABLE SPELLS

Some spells are marked Sustainable, this allows the effect to be maintained for an additional Round by taking a sustaining action. The spell continues as long as they take a backup action to sustain the spell. Only one spell can be sustained with each action, though some abilities change this.

RIFFING

Talented arcane casters can, with some additional time and effort, improvise new effects. To riff, the caster explains the effect they're attempting to accomplish and makes a Magic Arts Test based on the complexity of the effect. If they succeed, the GM will set a number of bars required to achieve the effect. The caster may then choose to spend 1 Grit to start riffing for that effect.

Riffing is always more difficult than using pre-existing spells—it should always take at least one more bar than a similar effect.

REPEATED RIFFS AND LEARNING SPELLS

Riffs are inherently unpredictable, and may require a different amount of bars even for the same effect. Nonetheless, they tend to become easier with repeated use, and eventually, with GM permission, the GM may decide that a player can learn a riff as a spell by paying Fortune.

When learning a riff as a spell, count it as a paradigm ability in the college that it requires the most bars for with a Fortune cost equal to 10 times the number of bars required in that college—if there's a tie, it can count as either college.

ETHEREAL BEINGS AND INVERTED SPELLS

Arcane magic works by transforming mana into energy and vice versa. Mages have learned to affect ethereal beings by "Inverting" their spells, causing them to affect ethereal beings rather than material ones. An inverted spell follows all the same rules as a normal spell, except it only affects ethereal beings.

An inverted spell leaves a physical impression opposite it's effect on ethereal beings—an inverted fireball may leave a dusting of frost in its wake, or an inverted blinding flash may lead to a brief shadow over the area. This is usually cosmetic but the GM may decide that particularly powerful inverted spells have minor effects.

Balancing Riffs and Learning Spells

Riffs are inherently weaker than established spells in exchange for being more flexible. This means that GMs should feel free to err on the side of under-powering an effect when allowing it as a riff. If a player uses a riff multiple times, the GM can reassess and decide how powerful the effect should be. Once the GM is confident that a riff is balanced, they may then offer it to the players as a spell if they want to learn it.

As a basic guideline, riffs should not allow concrete mechanical effects that exceed these guidelines:

A riff should not do more than 2d6 damage per additional bar devoted to damage

A riff should not provide more than 4 Armor/Adamant per bar devoted to blocking damage

A riff should not provide more than +1 on tests per bar devoted to assistance

A riff should not provide more than +3 bonus to a defense per turn per bar

Most riffs should last no more than one Round unless they are sustainable or they provide an effect other than damage or a numerical bonus.

These rules aren't hard and fast rules, and the GM might decide to break one or more of them if other factors make them seem appropriate, or they take advantage of a situation.

SACRED MAGIC

"Who can equal her greatness? Anyone?
Powerful, exalted, and fabulous is her status.
Ishtar: can anyone equal her greatness?
Powerful, exalted, and fabulous is her status!
— Ancient Prayer to Ishtar

Sacred magic originates from a realm beyond our own consisting of pure ideals and concepts. Practitioners of sacred magic gain their magic by forging a connection to a powerful being representing one or more ideal or concept (these being are often considered Gods, though some traditions and scholars of magic merely refer to them as Powers). This connection allows sacred magicians to accomplish miraculous things (particularly as they tie to that concept), but requires care to prevent their psyche from being overwhelmed by the magic.

Casting Sacred Magic

Channeling sacred magic is dangerous— sacred casters describe the experience as channeling pure ideals that override every aspect of their minds, leaving them disoriented and eroding their sense of self. To get back in touch with themselves, chosen develop techniques to allow them to bring themselves back into balance, usually taking the form of prayers, mantras, or philosophic recitations.

Each sacred spell has a **Dissonance** score. For each point of Dissonance, the caster must take one **Attune** Main Action each turn until the Dissonance score is reduced to zero. If they fail to take the Attune action on their next turn, they take 3 points of Irresistible Animity damage for each point of remaining Dissonance on the spell.

Whenever casting a sacred spell, a Dynamic success reduces the Dissonance of the spell by 1. On a Critical success, ignore all Dissonance on the spell. On a Dynamic Failure, immediately take Animity damage as if you failed to take the Attune action.

ATTUNE

Main Action

You spend time engaged in practices to avoid the psychic shock of channeling sacred energy, usually through prayer or meditation. Each Attune action reduces the Dissonance of the last sacred spell you cast by 1. If you fail to take an Attune action on your turn to reduce the dissonance of a spell, you take 3 points of irresistible Animity damage for each point of remaining dissonance at the end of your turn.

CHANTS

Sometimes Sacred casters can empty themselves beyond their practiced prayers to achieve completely novel effects through the will of the divine. This takes the form of chanting. Pay 3 Grit and make a Magic Arts roll against a TN set by the GM based on the desired effect. On a success, the effect happens. Effects should generally be within the scope of sacred magic itself, but the GM has final say on what is possible.

Chanting takes a higher toll of Dissonance than normal spells, even for similar amount of effects. The GM should set the Dissonance value of the spell/chant to at least one higher than comparable spells. Chosen find it difficult to empty themselves through chanting repeatedly—so if a chosen tries chanting too soon after their last chant, they may find the TN and Dissonance of the chant increasing.

EXORCISM AND ETHEREAL BEINGS

Sacred magic spells and abilities do not affect purely ethereal beings normally. Instead sacred casters use a technique called exorcism to deal with purely ethereal beings by directly channeling pure sacred magic at a spirit. The channeled magic pushes into the space occupied by the spirit and evicts it. Exorcism usually does not kill or destroy an ethereal being, but it disrupts their connection to a particular person, place, or thing, and prevents that being from manifesting for a time, or perhaps, for good. Further, exorcism breaks a spirit's ability to manifest in the normal world. Once its broken, the spirit cannot stay.

Exorcism tests are Magic Arts vs. Aegis of the ethereal being. On a success, the spirit takes 5 Animity damage. If the spirit is a haunt or a demon, things work a bit differently. A successful exorcism roll versus a haunt or a demon reduces the Power of the spirit by 1. Once they reach 0 Power, they are disrupted. Once a haunt or demon is reduced to 1 Power they gain a last surge of strength and take all actions as if they were at full Power until their Power is reduced to 0.

Choosing a God

Most baru priests don't think much about the order of gods in their worship. They worship the entire pantheon of Babylonian Powers. But for those chosen to wield sacred magic, their connection is more pronounced and particular. Before choosing any sacred paradigms, a PC must first choose a specific Power that they are in tune with over and above the others. Being in tune with the divine is symbolized by mantles. Chosen do wear robes, vestments, or other garments known as mantles to identify themselves as priests, but the mantles are also metaphors for their embodiment of the divine. Thus, a chosen bearing the mantle of authority allows a sacred caster to take choices from that particular paradigm, but not others. The powers and their related mantles are listed below. Casters cannot choose sacred paradigms that don't relate to their Power's mantles.

Power	Mantles
Marduk	Authority, Justice, Cultivation
Ishtar	Passion, Death, Authority
Nabu	Knowledge, Secrets, Passion
Shamash	Justice, Passion, Knowledge
Sayin	Secrets, Cultivation, Nature
Nergal	Death, Secrets, Nature
Ninurta	Cultivation, Justice, Death
Enlil (Disgraced, Forbidden)	Nature, Knowledge, Death

Sublime Magic

The most fundamental magic pervades all things, it determines what they are. Yet, what we are is a choice, and therefore, we decide what the magic inside us can do
— Void Yojin Teaching

Sublime magic is the magic of embodiment—both of the body but also of matter itself. Sublime practitioners through careful meditation can take aspects of that element into themselves, as well as manipulate that element around them. Each Yojin must choose one way, or element, and may only take abilities from that way's paradigm.

Casting Sublime Magic

Unlike Sacred or Arcane Magic, Sublime Magic is not a matter of casting a spell in the moment, but rather imbuing the sublime practitioner with power they can channel throughout the day.

Each Sublime practitioner has a number of **meditations** they can practice that unlock abilities. While the form the meditations take varies by practitioner and tradition, each meditation takes five minutes to perform, and lasts for 24 hours, or until replaced by a different meditation.

SUBLIME MAGIC AND ETHEREAL BEINGS

Sublime casters learn to channel their magic into their body. A sublime caster can use this to affect an ethereal spirit as if it was physical—treat this as an unarmed attack against the spirit but use Magic Arts in lieu of Melee Combat.

ARTIFICES AND ARTIFACTS

While many uses of magical items have been replaced by technological advances, many magical items are still available (often at high cost). Magical items are divided into two categories: the temporary enchantments of artifices and the rare and unique artifacts.

ARTIFICES

By far the most common type of magical item, **Artifices** are objects created by Mana Mages using the artificing ability (see pg 164), often in conjunction with another Mage or Baru. Artifices rely on the temporary infusion of mana from a caster, and require additional effort to re-enchant every few weeks. This continual upkeep means that most artifices are used only by the truly wealthy who can afford to pay mages to keep their artifices working—and that most artifices that can be replaced with a technological replacement have been.

A few common artifices are listed in the gear section (see "Artifices" on pg 104).

ARTIFACTS

In contrast to artifices, **Artifacts** are far rarer. No known method can create an artifact, and artifacts are zealously sought after and guarded by those with the wealth and ability to procure them. Artifacts begin their lives as ordinary objects (or occasionally artifices), before becoming empowered, often in a moment of strong emotion or historical significance.

Each artifact is unique—and alive. At the core of an artifact is a spirit, which provides the magical abilities of the artifact. While few artifacts are truly sapient, those few with the Fortune to work with an artifact describe them as possessing personalities and idiosyncratic tics. Many artifacts seem to favor a particular value, cause, or type of action, flaring with extra power when advancing that cause, and becoming inert (or perhaps ceasing to exist entirely) if their values are defied.

RULES FOR ARTIFACTS

Artifacts, as befit their nature as sentient (if not always sapient) beings, follow the rules for other NPCs: namely, each Artifact has a Power and Regard. Power represents the strength of the artifact, while Regard reflects its general sense of alignment towards a character, based on the nature of the artifact and what the character has done to earn its favor. Artifacts have an intrinsic sense of actions related to their values done within their vicinity (generally within several hundred meters). Changing the Regard of an artifact follows the general rules for changing the Regard of a Relation (see "Changing Regard" on pg 43), and persistently increasing their Base Regard often involves spending time boosting their Regard with the Boost Relationship Downtime Action (see pg 37).

A sample artifact is detailed below.

THE PEN OF REMEMBRANCE

At first glance the pen of remembrance appears to be an old but otherwise unremarkable fountain pen. Carved of ebony, it's covered with a worn but elaborate lacquered scene of two female orcs, one appearing as a young adult, the other as an elderly woman. On one side, the young orc is studiously writing on a desk, on the other, the elderly ork is reading a letter, sitting serenely by a pond. Flitting about the edges of the design are elaborate scenes of tales and adventures—those who bear the pen for long notice that these scenes change—and the identities of the two orcs occassionaly switch. Looking carefully in the Shine (TN 12) reveals the pen as an artifact, channeling a minor herald of knowledge and passion.

Those who bond with the pen eventually learn more of its history: if they write without a purpose they uncover the correspondence of two Ghassulian merchants who, about 100 years ago, studiously corresponded with each other as they went on their separate paths, sharing their experiences, emotions, and affection for each other throughout their lives.

ARTIFACT VALUES

The Pen of Remembrance increases its Regard for a character as the character uses it to write down true stories, particularly those of emotional significance or about close friends, family, and relations. The pen decreases its Regard when the character lies about the past, allows important memories to be forgotten or undocumented, or destroys knowledge or stories.

EFFECTS OF REGARD

The effects of Regard are cumulative: a character with positive Regard gains the effect of all abilities

with a Regard threshold equal to or less than their Regard (likewise a character with a negative Regard is affected by all effects with a Regard threshold equal to or greater than their Current Regard). The 0 Regard ability is always active.

- **15 Regard:** While bearing the pen, the memory the character needs to carry on always comes to mind. Whenever the character makes a Grit Test, they roll two extra dice. On a success, they heal 5 Animity, in addition to the normal effects.
- **10 Regard:** Dreams near the pen are restful, bringing the character to places that give them strength and connection. Each Downtime the character is in possession of the pen, they regain 5 Animity.
- **5 Regard:** While near the pen, the character finds useful facts they know pop into their head. Whenever the character spends a Grit to reroll a die on a Humanities, Science, or Tech roll, that roll becomes Inspired.
- **0 Regard:** When writing down things the character has learned or experienced, they do so with perfect recall. Gain Reliable 3 on any tests to remember facts or recall details if the character attempts to write the answer with the pen.
- **-5 Regard:** Every negative experience the bearer encounters is seared into their memory. Increase all Animity damage by 3.
- **-10 Regard:** Dreams near the pen are fitful remembrances of trauma. Whenever the pen is within 10m of a character it has -10 or less Regard to it rolls 4d6+2 vs the offending characters Aegis—on success that character takes 2d6 Animity damage the next time they sleep.
- **-15 Regard:** The pen waits for an opportune time to flood its enemy with painful hallucinations of their worst moments. Upon selecting a target, the pen rolls 4d6+2 vs the targets Aegis. On a success, the next time the character is in a stressful or dangerous scene, the character is flooded with hallucinations. The target must succeed on a TN 13 20 Progress Track to escape from the memory, using skills as appropriate in the dream (The GM should be permissive of skill use, following dream logic). While in the hallucination, the character can take no other actions. For each Round the character doesn't escape, they take 2d6 Animity damage. When a character is affected by this ability they are immune until the end of the next Downtime, and gain +5 Aegis against all future attacks from the pen.

PART III
CHARACTER CREATION

Starting a Story

SESSION ZERO

Once you've determined who you're playing with (and who's the GM), there are still a few things to determine about your story before you start the first session. We refer to this step before the first session as "Session Zero".

The session zero has several goals:

- Determine the scope of the game
- Determine theme, tone, and mood
- Establish expectations and boundaries
- Determine the setting and Community
- Establish character concepts and connections

Together, these goals aim to get everyone on the same page so everything that comes after flows better, is more satisfying for all, and creates a rich starting point where the PCs are connected to the world and each other.

STEP 1: SCOPE

Scope refers to how long and at what level the games that follow will be. Sometimes, it is fun to run a one-shot game night where everyone plays high-power characters that all die in a blaze of glory at the end. This is, of course, something you should talk to each other about lest someone bring a brand-new character to the table they have spent hours creating and hope to play forever. Whether your group will be together a set number of sessions or whether your game will be every week until darkness consumes the world, that is something you should talk about beforehand. Also, since Subversion's Community and character creation process is collaborative, ask the GM ahead of time which parts of a character should be made ahead of time and which parts should wait until the session zero. This is so some players don't spend the first half of the meeting helping others make characters while others twiddle their thumbs.

SCOPE CHECKLIST:

- How many sessions will we be playing? How often? Where?
- Premade characters? New characters? Does anyone need help making their characters? Any GM caveats for character creation?

STEP 2: THEME, TONE, MOOD

So often in games, otherwise well-intentioned people start off with such high hopes for a role playing experience only to end after a few sessions in frustration. Some may come to a Subversion group desperately wanting an experience like *Blade Runner* or *The Matrix* where broody protagonists take out bad guys with their wits and cold steel. Another player may come to that same group wanting a heartfelt family story where things go bad, and yes, sometimes you need to steal from a corporation, but things work out in the end, just like an episode of *She-Ra* or *Avatar the Last Airbender*. Still others are looking for a group where silly heroes make fart jokes, seduce everything that moves, and maybe save the day if they get around to it. Frankly, those expectations are not likely to all be met in one game.

Ask your players what themes they are interested in exploring, and tell them yours. Redemption? Revenge? Do-gooding? Crime? Those are all worthwhile games to play… but not if someone is not going to have fun playing them. Similarly, ask your players also what tone and mood they are looking for as well. *Lord of the Rings*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Monty Python's Holy Grail* are all, generally, in the medieval fantasy genre, but the tone and mood of each is vastly different. Find out if players are looking for cartoony violence, explicit violence, or somewhere between. Find out if they want a dark mood, where things are scary, or something lighter, where the bad guys are all dealt with nice and cleanly. Asking these questions in a session zero will save everyone heartache in the long run.

THEME, TONE, AND MOOD CHECKLIST

- Is the mood of the game hopeful? Realistic? Dark? Bleak? Grim?
- Is the tone of the game silly? Goofy? Dark humor? Realistic? Severe? Dead serious?
- What are some themes the GM and players want to highlight?

Step 3: Expectations and Boundaries

Every table has different expectations for how games should be run, and what sort of behavior and topics are expected. An important part of planning a game is determining what these boundaries are—and ensuring that the players and GM all agree on what they are. This is particularly important to include all the players in this process: as a GM it is certainly possible that content within the game is disturbing to you. But since you are the one facilitating the story, you simply won't include what makes you uncomfortable. Players, on the other hand, never really know what's going to come next. That can be part of the fun of playing RPGs—but it can also lead to some awkward and disappointing moments. Fortunately, those moments can be mitigated fairly easily. Since players are coming to the group with all sorts of hidden hurts and personal situations, it is impossible for a GM to know all the players well enough to anticipate what sort of things might bring up unpleasant/traumatic feelings or memories. Without trying to stifle the creativity of anyone, it is always better to know what topics are sensitive to players. If someone you love just passed, you may not want to play a game of Subversion where your loved ones are murdered. That is OK. And if you are really one of those people who can't see how people's feelings are more important than a game, Subversion isn't for you. We'll refund your money.

In order to minimize this kind of discomfort (or in some cases re-traumatizing victims, triggering PTSD, etc.), discuss what sort of things your players (or you, the GM!) don't want to deal with at the table. There are many ways to do this, including the checklist below. Sometimes, a GM can simply ask players the sort of thing they don't want to include in a game. This works best if players and GM are already familiar with each other. Other times, it might be helpful to have players write down any soft spots on a piece of paper in terms of what things they definitely want none of and things they just don't want to deal with in detail. You might decide to hand out a questionnaire for each player to fill out so you can make a list of things not to have in your campaign. The tools aren't the important thing. Talking with each other and caring about each other enough to show the utmost respect, is.

When Things Go Wrong

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, something unpleasant can come up while playing a game, perhaps even during the session zero! The kind of game you want to run may not be compatible with the kind the players, or a single player, want to play. That is OK! That doesn't make them, or you, a failure or bad. That just means one of life's little frustrations has reared its head. Don't let that stop you from trying again or recruiting new players.

It is inevitable that sometime, someone at the table is going to upset someone else, or maybe something no one could have planned for caused someone unintended pain. These situations also do not mean anyone is bad. But it is an opportunity for discussion. Ask the person who was upset if they want to talk about it or if they would like whatever upset them to be undone or not brought back up again. Whatever they say, listen. Let them make the call and respect their decision. Then keep playing and give them the chance to start having fun again!

EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES CHECKLIST

- Expectations for food/drink/alcohol
- Expectations for cell phones/distractions
- What topics are hard lines (do not include in the game at all)
- What topics should be veiled (only occur off-screen)

PARTICULAR BOUNDARIES

The following is a list of common boundaries to consider. Depending on your group, you may find it easy to run through all of them, or to set up a survey or other way of soliciting boundaries from your group.

- Violence
  - To children
  - To animals
  - Gender based violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Blood/Gore
  - Torture
  - Self harm/suicide
  - Genocide
  - Rape
  - Terrorism
- Discrimination
  - Racism
  - Sexism
  - Homophobia
  - Transphobia
- Religion (real world)
- Politics (real world)
- Romance
  - Sex
  - Explicit Sex
  - Between PCs
- Body humor
- Pregnancy
  - Miscarriage
  - Abortion

STEP 4: DETERMINING THE COMMUNITY

The first step in creating a party is determining what Community they are part of. Detailed rules for creating a Community are in Creating a Community (pg 76). However, at this stage the question is where does the party fit in the world? Are they part of a neighborhood, an organization, a religion, a government, a movement, or something else?

COMMUNITY CHECKLIST

- Where is the Community?
- Who lives there?
- What sort of place is it?
- What are the main issues and conflicts in the Community?

STEP 5: DETERMINE CHARACTER CONCEPTS AND CONNECTIONS

Once you've determined the themes and Community of the story, now is the time to figure out what sort of characters people are interested in playing. Detailed character creation rules are in PC Generation (pg 83), but at this point, the goal is to establish ideas in broad strokes before anything is set in stone. Don't worry about making any definite decisions at this point—you'll return to this in more detail once the Community is fully fleshed out.

CHARACTER CONCEPT CHECKLIST

- What skills and abilities do each member of the group have?
- What sort of things are each character motivated to do?
- How are the characters connected to the Community?
- How well do the different characters know each other?

Once you've completed your initial brainstorming, you can move on to create the Community in more detail.

Alternate Party Types

The default role that characters play in Subversion is that of Envoys — representatives that act as agents, defenders, ambassadors, and problem solvers of their various, mostly urban, communities. PCs will most often be Envoys from the same Community, and sent by whatever mechanism that community uses to determine how problems should be dealt with.

There are many more stories to be told in Subversion though other than just those of Envoys. If another type of story is more compelling to your group, do it! Below are a few other options:

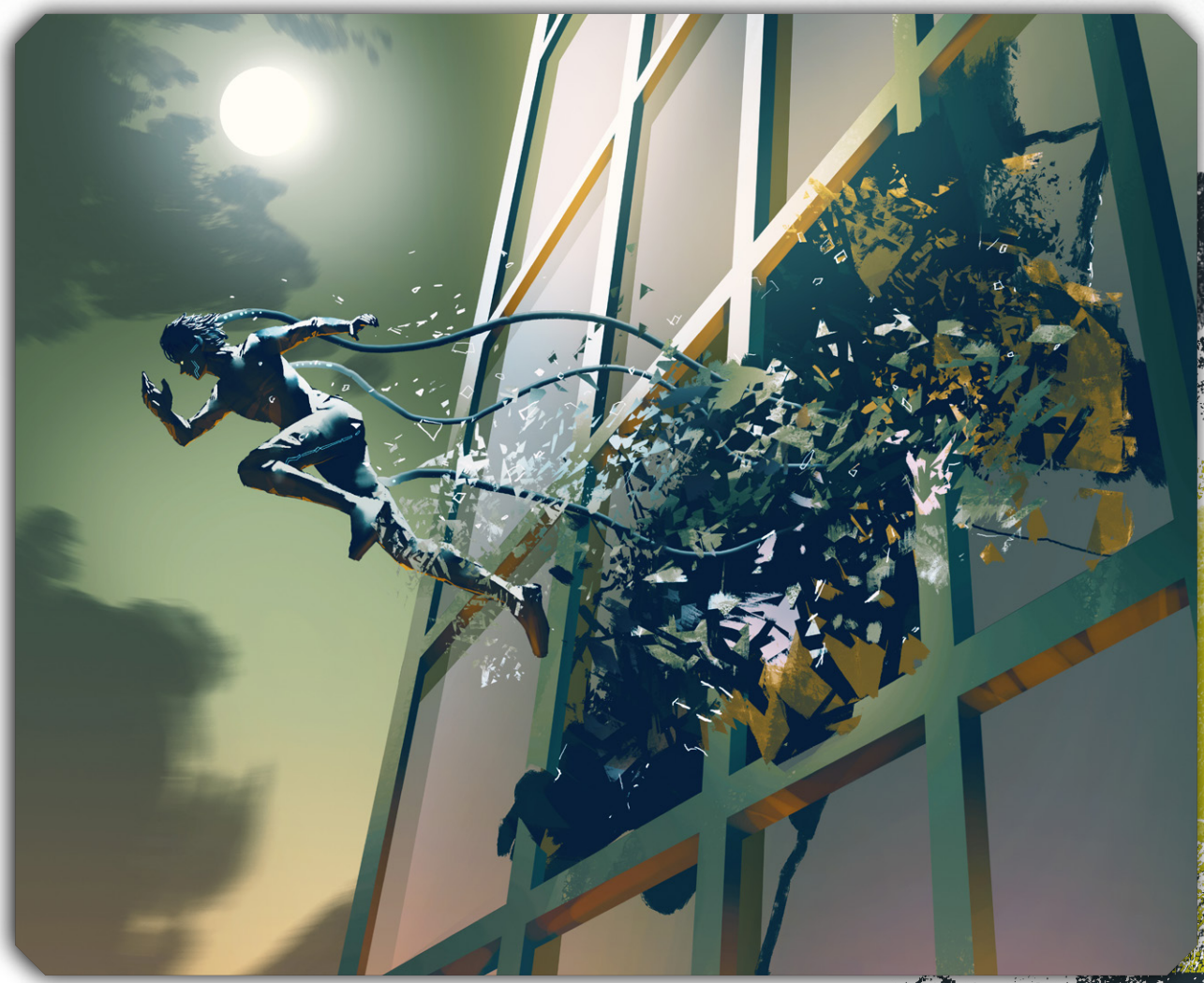
Victims of Circumstance: Instead of having a formal role, the characters may have just been in a certain place at a certain time and that's where the adventure begins.

Explorers: The world of Subversion is filled with magic and wonders, and explorers venture out into those places to discover the secrets hidden in these hard to reach places.

Gangers: The undercity of Neo Babylon is parceled up between gangs that eke out an existence on the few blocks they've designated as their turf, and gangers seek to promote their gang and stay alive.

Freebooters: Freebooters is the term for professional criminals who do jobs for hire. That's not to say they don't have their own agendas, goals, and morals, of course…

Employees: Employees work for some organization. Maybe you're working for the Department of Beast Control, or are all members of a traveling circus, or anyone else who has the money to pay for you to do interesting things.



Creating a Community

Each group of PCs will build a community together. The community is the larger group the PCs represent. The PCs are patrons, protectors, advocates, and products of their communities. However they are formed, they constitute what binds the PCs to each other and what resources the PCs have to draw from beyond their own.

When creating a community, follow these steps:

Playing without a shared community

By default, Subversion assumes that all the characters are part of a community (at least broadly construed), and that they're part of the same community. This game is designed to be about people making a difference in the world (for good or ill), and community is a key part of this. Some stories, however, might not have the PCs fit so cleanly into the assumption that everyone is part of the same community.

Sometimes, characters might start without being grounded in a larger community—maybe they left (voluntarily or otherwise) their previous community, or their previous community no longer exists. In this case the group might decide to wait to build a community until they find a home—or else define the community either broadly (e.g. a diaspora or ideological movement) or narrowly (the group of PCs and a few friends).

In other cases, the PCs may come from different communities. Maybe one or more members of the party are outsiders, tied to the rest of the group by personal connections rather than shared community. In these cases, the group may decide to allow each member of the party to create their own community. In this case, the GM may decide to decrease the amount of Fortune available for the community paradigm to prevent the number of Relations and resources from ballooning to a point that's hard to keep track of.

1. CHOOSE COMMUNITY TYPE

Type defines the broad kind of community the PCs belong to. Communities have considerable influence, for good or ill, on all their members. Though many communities are defined by a location, others are defined by groups of people connected by an ideology. At this point the players brainstorm the broad thematic concept of their community. Some examples below:

- **Neighborhood:** The community is part of a larger town or city.
- **Town:** The community represents the entirety of a village, town, enclave, commune, or other small gathering.
- **Corporate:** The community is directly controlled, and probably mostly owned, by a single corporation or business entity, or perhaps a strongly unified collection of businesses.
- **Temple:** The community is either wholly a Baru Temple or Yojin monastery, or such an institution plays a large role in the community.

Additionally, groups are encouraged to come up with some aspects of the community that reflect it's background, culture, and economy. A few suggestions:

- **Agricultural:** The community focuses on cultivating crops or livestock, either in a rural setting or as part of a massive hydroponic farm.
- **Artist:** The community has a large proportion of artists, performers, or craftspeople, and art, shows, and exhibits play a large part in the community.
- **Crime:** Your community is either victimized by, the source of, or both, of crime in the area.
- **Frontier:** Your community is either an outpost for delvers and explorers, or else otherwise. sparsely populated and away from major cities
- **Ideological:** Your community focuses on a specific belief or political philosophy.
- **Military:** Your community is connected to a military base, mercenary company, or similar.
- **Rebel:** The community exists to rebel against an unjust authority.

- **Refugee:** Your Community has fled from somewhere else seeking safety and a better life.
- **Religious:** The Community has a strong religious or spiritual basis.
- **Nomadic:** The Community has no one place it calls home, but travels from place to place.
- **Undermage:** The Community is connected to an arcane college, and driven by the scholarly goals and politics of that college.

2. CHOOSE POWER AND CASTE

Determine the general amount of Power your Community has (1-10) (see "Power" on pg 120), as well as its caste status among the rest of Neo Babylon. Some individuals within the Community may be of higher or lower Power and caste, but this is a measure of where the Community itself fits within the larger political, social, and economic setting. Caste defines what narrative lifestyle the Community and PCs fit into. Power determines the mechanics-based assets the Community can pull together to act with—a mixture of the abilities and size of the Community.

The default Power for a new Community in Subversion is 4, while the default caste is lower-middle.

Caste is a catch-all term that describes a person or group's general relationship to the economic, social, and power structures in Neo Babylon. It covers food, daily clothing, transportation options, rent, utilities, respect, and access to the financial and legal system.

Caste is mostly a narrative/role playing distinction. Higher classes do have more resources available, but unless they invest themselves in using them, they might as well not have them. So whether it is building the resource from the ground up (like lower castes have to) or rearranging lifestyles in order to make room for needed resources (as upper castes must), Fortune costs and availabilities for resources are the same for Communities of different castes.

The effect of caste can be broken into four main effects:

- The services and goods you are assumed to have by default, (see "Caste Gear" on pg 99).
- How much it costs to maintain your lifestyle (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37).
- How easy and how much it costs to take on debt. (see "Step 8. Choose Debt" on pg 94).

CASTE

UNDERCITY

You can't afford to pay the levy to gain access to Neo Babylon—and as a result have no rights or protection under the law. You probably can't afford much else either. The food you have is what you grow, scavenge or what is given by your gang. Clothing is homemade, stolen, or bought one piece at a time from a trader or C-link. You are not legally permitted to be in the overcity, though there are no limits for transportation in the undercity. You live in an abandoned building, hovel, dilapidated apartment, or whatever you can take from someone else. No utilities other than those your gang provides or you have jury-rigged, and what you have fails often. There is no active law in the Undercity. The best you can do is hope to find a sponsor in the Uppers that will offer you a job stable enough to be allowed to apply for lower caste status—though such opportunities are rare.

Undercity caste characters get 10 bonus Fortune.

LOWER

You have enough income to pay to live in the upper city—and everything else is a stretch. Food is at best bland processed gruel, and at worse missing. Your housing is crowded and neglected by your landlord. You take mass transit, rely on your work, or walk to get around. Many parts of the city exclude you based on your caste designation, and lawjacks are more likely to find a pretext to send you to the purgatorium than take your safety and concerns seriously.

Lower caste characters get 5 bonus Fortune.

LOWER-MIDDLE

You have enough income to cover the necessities and the occasional splurge, but little else. You wouldn't call your housing spacious, but at least it's yours. Your food tends towards the economical, but is broadly acceptable. You probably own a small electric commuter bike, and can afford a multi-user taxi service when you need it. Lawjacks are ambivalent to you as long as you don't cause trouble.

Lower-middle caste characters start with the normal amount of Fortune.

UPPER-MIDDLE

You can start to afford the nicer things in life. Food is good. Clothing is good and variable. You might own a car—failing that you can reliably get a private car service to pick you up and ferry to your destination. Your home is comparatively spacious, with a mixture of amenities. You're likely to get help from the lawjacks when you need it.

Upper-middle caste characters start with -10 starting Fortune.

UPPER

You have access to everything you need, and many things you don't. Food is great and you can get whatever you want. Clothing is never a problem and you buy new wardrobes often. You cycle through leases of high end ground vehicles, and use air-taxis to get around the city. The lawjacks show deference to you, and will rarely detain you and assume your side of the story is correct. Even when guilty, the fines for most crimes are easily paid without inconveniencing you.

Upper caste characters start with -30 starting Fortune.

ELITE

You can afford any luxury, with your ability to pay only mattering for positional goods between other elites. You have access to private air transport, both locally and for global travel, as well as a fleet of luxury ground vehicles and boats. You are treated with respect and deference by most people around you. You likely have some Lawjacks contracted to provide security for you, and violations of the law are almost never significant enough to be a major financial deterrent.

Elite caste characters start with -125 starting Fortune.

3. CHOOSE PRIMARY SKILL AND ARCHETYPE

Like other Factions, each Community has a Primary Skill (see pg 121) and Archetype (see pg 121) that define what the Community is best at when it comes together and does something. For example:

- A fishing community has a Primary Skill of Piloting, and an Archetype of Transporter—if anyone needs to get somewhere they can always find a boat willing to take an extra hand.
- A university has a Primary Skill of Humanities and an Archetype of Information—there is always someone able to answer some question.
- A disorganized neighborhood has the Melting Pot Archetype (and therefore no Primary Skill).
- A small town has a Primary Skill in Influence and the Connection Archetype—everyone knows everyone else and can always point you to the best person for a job.

When used this way, the Community is treated like any other Relation—sometimes you ask, and the Community answers.

4. COMMUNITY RESOURCES, FACTIONS, AND RELATIONS

Every Community has things, places, or people that lend it the ability to do unique things. These represent the skills of the Community, its buildings and architecture, or natural resources and beauty. These resources are captured in the **Community Paradigm** (see pg 132), representing the Relations and other resources common to the Community.

By default, the Community begins with 100 Fortune that it can spend on resources and Community Relations (see "Relations" on pg 132). These options cover helpful members of the Community, allied Factions, and special places and traits of the Community that the PCs can use to help them in their tasks. We recommend letting each person at the table spend 10-20 Fortune as they add their own flavor to the Community, though players and GMs are encouraged to pool Fortune and collaborate as desired!

At any later point, one or more characters can invest more Fortune into the Community to help boost its resources (or even it's Power and Caste)—and GMs are encouraged to provide benefits to the Community as a result of a successful job.

REGARD AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

If the Community's Regard towards a PC is below zero, the PC may not take advantage of any of the Community resources unless they spend 1 additional Downtime Action or Fortune than what is normally required. Generally speaking, the Regard of Community Relations tracks that of their Community, unless the PCs have made substantial interactions with the NPC to change their Base Regard.

If the Community's Regard towards a PC is ever below -5, they are in jeopardy. If the PCs end two episodes in a row at this level, they are ejected from the Community. In many Subversion stories (such as if the PC is an Envoy), this may mean the character is no longer functional as a PC. In that case, they become an NPC, and the player should create a new character. If the GM decides that being part of the Community isn't a crucial part of the story, the PC no longer has any Community and can use no Community relations. At the GMs discretion, the player may spend a Downtime Action to join a Faction corresponding to another Community that they have at least a +1 Regard in—they've found a new home.

NEUTRAL FACTIONS AND ADVERSARIES

In addition to the Factions and Relations that can aid the Community, each Community has other Factions that it interacts with on neutral or adversarial terms.

Each player should pick one of the following options:

- Add one Faction of Power 6 or less and Regard 0 towards the Community
- Add one adversarial (see pg 124) Faction with Regard -5 towards the Community. The Community gains Fortune equal to the Power of that Faction times five.
- Add one adversarial (see pg 124) NPC of Power greater than the Community and a Regard of -10. The Community gains Fortune equal to their Power times five.
- Decrease the Regard of the Lawjacks or other authority by 5. The Community gains 20 Fortune.

LAWJACKS

The Lawjacks are omnipresent in the world of Neo Babylon, serving government and corporation alike to maintain the order of the world—and while they don't necessarily wield the power, they enforce it. The lawjacks always count as a Faction in every game, however their Power depends on the resources deployed to your Community—in the downtown areas of Neo Babylon, the lawjacks are omnipresent and willing and able to muster whatever force necessary to reestablish order (Power 10), while the lawjack presence at a frontier outpost might be reduced to a halo code you can contact to report a crime. Of course, Power can change quickly with the Lawjacks—especially if it looks like there's trouble brewing that affects other Factions with the means to get the Lawjacks attention.

By default, the Lawjacks begin at a Power of 5 (one higher than your Community). For more rules about Lawjacks see "Lawjacks" on page 246.

In some parts of the world farther from Neo Babylon's influence, lawjacks are replaced with other governmental (or pseudo-governmental) entities. In this case, replace the lawjacks with an appropriate Faction.

6. CHOOSE VALUES

A Community's Values are likely shared by most individuals. These Values are generally accepted as right and normal. Acting in accordance with the Community's Values is easy. Acting in opposition to or challenging the Community's Values is difficult and leads to contention. Attempting to change a Community's Values is a monumental task, almost certain to fail. Any time a Community acquires or discards a Value is a major event.

Unlike the PCs' Values, Community Values should be more general because they reflect Values that are widely held collectively among the members of the Community.

The players choose two Values, and the GM chooses one. Note that the examples below are just that: examples. Groups are encouraged to create their own as befits their story.

Examples:

- **Religious Devotion:** We will participate/ faithfully observe the religious practices.
- **Justice is our Own:** We will never help the Lawjacks.
- **Everybody Eats:** We will make sure all our own people have food.
- **Economic Freedom:** We will always make sure our community comes first fiscally.
- **Keep it Nice:** No property damage in community.
- **Take Care of Ourselves:** We will keep community problems within the community.
- **Lay Low:** Don't bring government heat down on our community.
- **The Most Good:** Do what's best for our community, not what is best for the individual.
- **Vigorous Discourse:** We will always respect the right of everyone to speak their mind.
- **Frag 'Em:** We will not voluntarily serve, aid, or help authorities in any official capacities.
- **Food is Life:** We will always find some food for those who need it.
- **Vengeful Pride:** We will not be passive when challenged or confronted. We won't accept criticism from outsiders.

7. CHOOSE IMPULSES

Every Community has the potential to become dysfunctional, especially in response to adversity. While the resources and Relations represent the strengths of the Community and their Values represent their aspirations, Impulses are the dark side of the Community—their fears, vices, and reactions that endanger the Community as a whole—or at least make dealing with problems more difficult.

A GM triggers a Community Impulse by spending Grit—this represents the various consequences of PC actions accumulating into a threat to the Community. When the GM triggers a Community Impulse, they will narrate what caused the Impulse to come to prominence (typically related to one of its triggers). An Impulse remains in place until one of the following conditions are met:

- The players achieve a Community goal (see below).
- The characters spend a session seeking to address the issue (see "Offer to help someone in the community" on pg 39).
- The players successfully complete a 20 length Downtime Progress Track aimed at resolving the Impulse.

Each Community starts with two Impulses.

List of Impulses

Authority Seeking

Your Community turns to authority and power when threatened. Increase the lawjack's Power by 2 while this Impulse is in effect. At the beginning of each Downtime, the GM gains 3 Grit and the lawjack's Regard increases by 1 (this increase goes away when the Impulse is resolved).

Defiance

When faced with a slight, real or perceived, your Community keeps fighting, even to it's detriment. Decrease the Regard of one Adversarial Faction of a Power equal to or higher than your Community by 5 while this Impulse is in effect. At the beginning of each Downtime, the Regard of that Faction or NPC decreases by one (this is not restored when the Impulse ends.) If this would reduce their Regard below -15 (not including the -5 penalty), the GM instead gains 5 Grit each Downtime.

Xenophobia

When times are tough, your Community turns against outsiders. Decrease the Regard of all Relations outside of the Community by 3 until this Impulse has been resolved.

Despondency

When things get tough, your Community becomes apathetic, with people shirking their responsibilities and the Community falling into disrepair. Decrease the benefits of caste for all members of the Community by one step, unless they spend 1 Fortune or 2 Grit at the beginning of each Downtime Phase.

Extravagance

In times of stress, your Community leans into festivities, ritual, or other Community actions that shut down the Community and take their time. PCs lose their default Downtime Action unless they spend 3 Grit.

INTOXICATION
Your Community widely indulges in a drug or other substance that numbs their abilities to help or lead. Even if everyone doesn't indulge, it makes getting anything done nearly impossible. All Tests during Downtime gain one instance of Dulled.

ISOLATION
In times of trouble, your Community turns inward, leaving each person to handle their own issues. All Community Relations Regard decreases by 5 (minimum zero) while this Impulse is in effect.

LASHING OUT
When problems occur, your community turns to unrest and vandalism, triggering a response from the Lawjacks. Decrease the lawjack's Regard by 7 while this Impulse in effect (see "Lawjack Regard" on pg 246).

PHOBIA
Your community has a long running fear (be it of spirits, nature, crime, or anything else) that sets tensions on edge when times get rough (either directly or indirectly). Take 3 Animity damage each downtime while this Impulse is in effect.

PROFLIGACY
All problems can be fixed with money—at leasts that's the thought of your community. To end this Impulse, the players must collectively contribute 5 Fortune to the community (or find another way to pay off the debt). Until the cost is paid off, the GM gains 2 additional Grit each downtime and no Fortune can be invested in the community paradigm.

8. CHOOSE GOALS

These are what the community is striving towards. The shared hopes and dreams, or perhaps the collective desire to move away from an undesired fate.

Each community should pick at least 3 goals. Some examples:

- We want to improve our standards of living/ caste
- We want to improve the regard of another faction towards us
- We want to increase our Power
- We want to build a specific resource or monument
- We want to gain access to a particular necessity or amenity
- We want to deal with a problem or impulse in our community
- We want to weaken a rival faction
- We want to regain our former glory
- We want things to stay exactly like they are

Goals provide aims for the players to choose when picking what to do each session (see "Primary Goal" on pg 38) and signal what Envoys are expected to work towards (and what actions the community might consider a betrayal!).

Changing Communities

Sometimes a group may find it fits the story to change communities—maybe they've been forced to leave or decide that their personal goals, values, and priorities would lead them to go somewhere else, or else something disastrous has happened to their community. In some cases (of a single PC deciding to leave) this might lead to a character leaving and a new one being created, but in some cases one or all of the PCs might change communities while continuing to be a part of the ongoing story. In this case, the group might pause and return to this chapter to make a new community.

PC Generation

Once your group has determined who your Community is, the next step is for each player to create their PC. PC creation can be broken into 13 steps:

1. Choose Lineage
2. Choose Origins and Background
3. Choose Caste
4. Choose Ideology and Values
5. Choose Impulse
6. Choose Dramatic Hooks
7. Create Relations
8. Choose Debt
9. Choose Attribute Ranks
10. Choose Skills
11. Choose Paradigms
12. Purchase Gear
13. Finishing Steps

Fortune

Fortune is the currency of Subversion. Fortune is what PCs will gain most often for their actions during sessions and use to advance their characters. It is common for folk in Neo Babylon to talk about their blessings in terms of Fortune, whether they worked for them or not. Skills, natural ability, wealth, and community are all blessings from the gods. Fortune can be exchanged in-game for 1000 stanz each (and vice versa). For convenience's sake, prices are given in Fortune, representing the fact that sometimes goods might be paid in labor, favors, or as a gesture of goodwill rather than in official currency. If you find it necessary to keep track of purchases smaller than 1 Fortune, you can convert Fortune to stanz and keep track of stanz instead.

With GM permission you may transfer Fortune to other characters.

Spending Fortune

When starting new characters, Players have 320 Fortune to spend between Attributes, skills, paradigms, gear, and petty cash. Players may increase or decrease their available Fortune through their choice of caste, start with debt, or if they choose to begin with a corrupted Value (see "Corrupted Starting Value" on pg 93), as specified below:

- Starting as Undercity caste (10 bonus Fortune)
- Starting as Lower caste (5 bonus Fortune)
- Starting as Lower Middle Caste (no bonus Fortune, recommended as default)
- Starting as Upper Middle Caste (-10 starting Fortune)
- Starting as Upper Caste (-30 starting Fortune)
- Starting as Elite Caste (-125 starting Fortune)
- Starting with a corrupted Value (5 bonus Fortune)
- Starting with debt, see debt Step 9

In addition, players get two sources of bonus Fortune that must be spent in their respective paradigms (though other Fortune may be added to those categories).

- **Relations:** 30 Fortune
- **Background Paradigm:** 10 Fortune (an additional 10 may be gained by picking a drawback)

Default Allocation

If this is your first time, we strongly recommend playing lower-middle caste (no bonus Fortune) and the following distribution of the 320 starting Fortune:

- **Attributes:** 80 Fortune
- **Skills:** 165 Fortune
- **Paradigms:** 60 Fortune (plus an additional 10 Fortune that may only be spent on background paradigms)
- **Gear:** 10 Fortune
- **Remaining:** 5 Fortune
- **Relations:** 30 Fortune (bonus Fortune, not part of 320 starting Fortune)

Step 1: Choose Lineage

Each character chooses one lineage and one lineage option. The playable lineages in Subversion represent the most common biological peoples on the planet. Choosing a lineage (Dwarf, Elf, Goblin, Harmaku, Human, Orc, or Yettin) impacts your PC's general physical appearance and abilities, and allows you to choose from a menu of options reflecting the variety of people who share that lineage.

Lineage and Origin

While Humans are the most common peoples on the planet, they still do not represent a majority among the others. Despite human cultures apparently dominating the planet during the last two millennia, they and others such as dwarves, elves, goblins, orcs, and yettin have assimilated into each other's cities where they work, play, and live alongside each other with a variety of less numerous and more remarkable lineages as well.

LINEAGE AND BIOLOGY

The lineages presented here all have the same basic body plan, organs, and mental acuity. It is uncertain if or how closely the different lineages may be related. Romantic and sexual attraction across the lineages is common, and there is no dearth of couples who choose to begin families along those lines. However, there has never been offspring recorded between members of different lineages, even those that appear the most similar (e.g. elves and humans); families in this situation often grow through other methods, such as adoption, if they feel parental urges.

DWARVEN

See pg 234 for more about Dwarves.

Dwarves tend to be shorter and sturdier than most other lineages. While Dwarves are the most common lineage in Acape Anya, they are a common sight throughout the world.

DWARVEN LINEAGE OPTIONS

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Toxin Resistant:** Gain +4 to defenses when resisting Toxins or Metabolic Damage
- **Lessons from the Ground:** Increase Brawn to 2.
- **Small:** You and/or your family are smaller and less stocky than most dwarves. Gain +2 on physicality Tests related to hiding or navigating tight spaces.
- **Monstrous Heritage:** You grow moss or grass in place of hair. Your Unarmed attacks do 2d6 damage (+Brawn) and have AP 1
- **Unshakable:** +1 Vigilance, +1 max Grit

ELVEN

See pg 235 for more about Elves.

Elves are slighter than humans with pointed ears, but their most noticeable characteristic is that they don't age after childhood, instead appearing in their prime until their death.

ELVEN LINEAGE OPTIONS

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Graceful Agility:** Increase Agility to 2.
- **Benefits of Long Life:** When using a skill untrained, gain Reliable 2.
- **Hale if not Hearty:** +10 Health
- **Keen Eye:** +1 dice to Observation Tests
- **Fae Sight:** +3 on Shinesight Tests

GOBLIN

See pg 235 for more about Goblins.

Goblins are smaller than any other lineage, both in height and build. Their skin is most commonly green, but shades of orange and yellow are not uncommon.

GOBLIN LINEAGE OPTIONS

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Goblin Scamper:** Increase Agility to 2.
- **Quick Mind, Quick Feet:** At the start of a cinematic, if you were not caught unaware,

you can perform a Backup Action before the turn order begins.

- **Sensitive Ears:** +1d6 on Observation Tests
- **Long Fingers:** +1d6 and Augment 1 to any Test that requires fine manipulation (e.g. Medicine when performing surgery, Science when manipulating small parts)
- **Diminutive:** Gain +2 on physicality Tests related to hiding or navigating tight spaces.

Harmaku

See pg 236 for more about Harmaku.

Harmaku are most notable for their (mostly vestigial) wings as part of their arms. Harmaku reproduce via parthenogenesis, and are generally considered female by other lineages, though individual Harmaku differ on the validity of that assumption. Family units for Harmaku are called broods—shared lines descended from different progenitor matriarchs in the distant past.

Harmaku Lineage Options

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Useful Wings:** You gain +1d6 on all physicality Tests related to balance or jumping, as you can use your wings to aid balance and help control your movement. If you have a Brawn of 3 or more, you may use your wings to glide, allowing you to avoid taking falling damage and travel up to 10m for each meter you fall (this counts as normal movement, if you do not take this movement on your turn while falling you lose control and fall the rest of the distance)
- **Deadly Talons:** Your talons, either through natural strength or augmentation, are fearsome weapons. Your unarmed attacks do 2d6 damage (+Brawn) and have AP 1.
- **Poise and Plumage:** Whether your confidence is driven by your appearance or your upbringing, you are confident and assertive. Increase Charisma to 2.
- **Avian Agility:** Your high metabolism manifests as speed and physical control. Increase Agility to 2.
- **Keen Eyes:** You gain +1d6 on all Observation Tests

Human

See pg 236 for more about Humans.

Humans are the most numerous lineage in the world, and as such come in an even broader range of cultures and appearances.

Human Lineage Options

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Force of Will:** Increase Will to 2.
- **Residual Instincts:** +2 Vigilance.
- **Marathoner:** +2 dice to Physicality when running.
- **Team-Oriented:** You work well in groups. When helping in a Teamwork Test, you gain Reliable 3.
- **Driven:** Gain +2 max Grit.

Orc

See pg 237 for more about Orcs.

Orcs tend towards being slightly stronger than humans, and tend to having slightly better acuity with their senses (especially when it comes to taste and smell).

Orc Lineage Options

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Broad Shoulders:** Increase Brawn to 2.
- **Keen:** Increase Awareness to 2.
- **Destiny through Passion:** +2 Aegis
- **Porcine Snout:** Gain +3 to Observation Tests related to smell.
- **Thick Skinned:** +1 Armor even when disrobed, the skin is rough to the touch

YETTIN

See pg 237 for more about Yettin.

Yettin are the largest and most varied of the lineages. Most yettin are 2-3 m tall, and most are fully covered in fur.

YETTIN LINEAGE OPTIONS

Choose 1 from the list below:

- **Yettin Size:** Increase Brawn to 2.
- **Ogre Features:** You have hair, not fur, and it mostly grows only on your head and face. +2 Vigilance.
- **Natural Weapons (Claws):** Unarmed attacks do 2d6 damage (+Brawn) and have AP 1
- **Yeti Features:** Your thick white fur provides you some protection. Gain +1 Armor. You gain Reliable 3 for all Physicality Tests in below freezing temperatures, but gain 1 instance of Dulled for all temperatures above 40°C(100°F)
- **Divergent Heritage:** Increase Will to 2. Lifespan is extended to an average of 320 years.

STEP 2: CHOOSE ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

The next step is to determine where your character came from. This is broken into two questions: what is your character's origin (their cultural upbringing), and background (their formative experiences).

Origins and Backgrounds have no direct effect; however most abilities in the Background Paradigms (pg 128) have a prerequisite of specific Origins or Backgrounds, reflecting the unique impacts they can have on a character. Characters gain 10 free Fortune that may only be spent on Background Paradigms, and may gain 10 more by picking a Drawback (see "Drawbacks" on pg 130).

In consultation with the GM, a player may decide that none of the printed Origins or Backgrounds fit their character. The player and GM should work to describe the alternative Origin or Background, and may decide to allow the character to take other background Paradigm abilities.

ORIGIN

Origin represents the culture in which you were raised or with which you identify via shared experiences. While in many cases this corresponds to the part of the world the character was raised in (particularly if their family had long roots there), this is not always the case, especially in Neo Babylon were origin may derive from their family heritage (even back several generations), or from living near

or within an expatriate community which influenced them. In any case, an origin is an influential part of any character's identity (regardless of how much they consciously identify with their background). Each PC chooses one origin at character creation.

ALTAIPHERAN

See pg 238 for more about the Altaipherans and the United Yettin Conference.

The physically largest of the lineages, Yettin have historically congregated in their own communities in Altaiphera, and for much of history, integrated less with the surrounding cultures (and each other). This tradition has led to wide variance among different strains of Altaipheran culture, though most place an emphasis on the importance of tight-knit community and are influenced by rural life.

The UYC may have rebelled against the more warlike Altaipheran Yettin, but they share a common culture.

BABYLONIAN

See pg 238 for more about Babylonians and Neo Babylon.

The world's first truly cosmopolitan city, Neo Babylon quickly outgrew its beginnings as a center of arcane learning and has become the world leader in nearly every area. To many, the dream of Neo Babylon is a worthwhile endeavor, blending all cultures into one, having the best of all worlds, and offering limitless opportunities to rise above the flood of hardship history has offered. For others, however, Neo Babylon is a flattening of beautiful and diverse heritages, the vices and pettiness from every group, and instead of limitless opportunity, they've only found oppression.

CHALDANI (ACAPE ANYA)

See pg 240 for more about the Chaldani and Acape Anya.

Originally the Chaldani were a people of mixed North Atlantican and Scandzian heritage, but later dwarven immigration from Iberia and Atlantica heavily influenced their culture. Chaldani culture tends to value large, extended families and hospitality, embellishment in all art forms, and fine living.

CHURUQIAN

See pg 241 for more about Churuqians and Churuq.

Churuq was a nation founded on Azore by goblin colonists from South Atlantica. The culture of Churuq places little value on physical prowess, so people of any lineage tend to be less muscular than the average elsewhere.

DE BROCELIANDE

See pg 240 for more about the de Broceliande and Val Broceliande.

To outsiders, people of this origin can seem dour and humorless. While capable of jokes, we are told, the culture typifies insular existence, and there is an innate hesitancy pervading their interactions. Folk from Val Broceliande do not give the benefit of the doubt; they wait for proof to trust.

The de Broceliande have a sense of the simple and the brutalist. Art, food, and language are all performed without adornment or enhancement that is seen as superfluous to function.

GHASSULIAN (TULKO)

See pg 242 for more about the Ghassulians and Tulko.

Long before Babylon grew to its heights, the Ghassulians, an early, orc-dominated, nomadic culture, spanned the Mediterranean as a trading empire, founding colonies and opening new areas of exploration even as they expanded the boundaries of ancient magic.

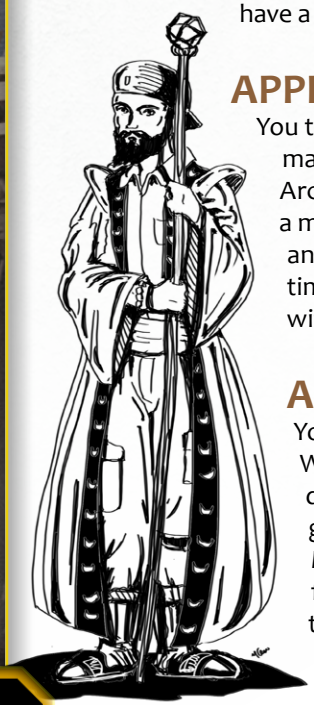
Though their original homeland was lost to the Shattering, and their colonies either conquered by Alexander or allied to and subsumed into Senekemet, this culture runs deep in many peoples around the world and prevails primarily in the city of Tulko on Azore.

BACKGROUND

The final component of your PC's identity is their background, describing the specific conditions they encountered in life so far, and what they learned along the way. While lineage describes what they are, and origins tell some of who they are, backgrounds explain how they have lived. Each PC chooses **one background**. You can choose a background similar to your Community's background or completely different. Backgrounds are purely narrative, so you can explain your character's journey however you like.

AGRICULTURIST

You are, or have been, in touch with nature or the earth is some way. You may have been a farmer, or lived off the land, or have been part of a group that worships, protects, or venerates the earth or growing things. Are you still farming? Have you lost the farm? Has some place you loved been despoiled? Are you trying to stop it? Environmentalist? Just have a green thumb?



APPRENTICE CASTER

You trained under official Babylonian mages. Whether it was at one of the Arcane Colleges or directly under a mentor mage, you made friends and gained mentors during your time who you can still call-in favors with.

ARTIST

You have a talent for creation. Whether it is music, visual art, dance, etc., you've lived by being good at some creative expression. Maybe you've made some money from your art, maybe not, but the true treasure is the friends you've made along the way.

BARU (OR BARU-BORN)

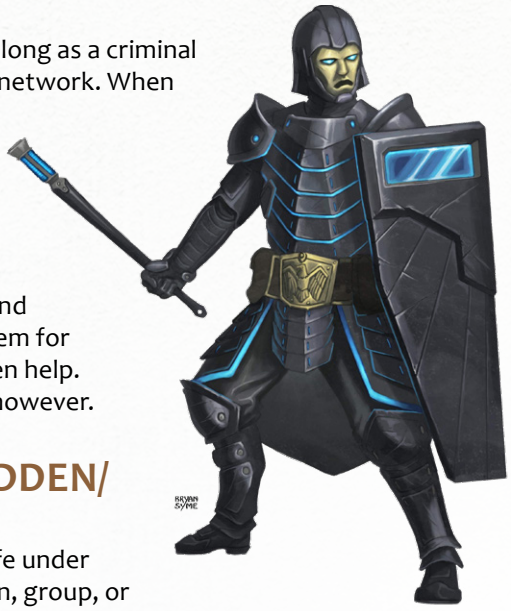
As a Baru priest (or someone who served at a temple when they were young), you are intimately familiar with the inner workings of Neo Babylonian religion. You may even be authorized to conduct religious services.

BOOTED OUT

You are a former Lawjack (or were in training to be). Your attitude, mistakes, insubordination or other indiscretions have got you kicked out. You cannot use any of your former assets or authority.

CRIMINAL

No one gets to live long as a criminal without building a network. When it comes to criminal activity or criminal knowledge you will likely know someone with the right knowledge, and you can contact them for information, or even help. Beware the price, however.



DOWNTRODDEN/ REFUGEE

You've lived your life under the heel of a person, group, or system that has not allowed you to gain a single foothold in life. As such, you've had to rely on your community (new or old) even more than most.

EXPLORER
You've spent a lot of your life going where others haven't been, where people haven't been in a long time, or where people like you don't go often. Visiting lost cultures, discovering dark secrets, and living dangerously.

INFLUENTIAL
You have a charmed life. People look up to you. Whether it is because of your high caste, a public incident where you became a well-liked public figure, or because you have money or the Ukkim's favor, civilization has been kind to you.

MERCENARY OR SOLDIER
You are a veteran of a former war or are a soldier-for-hire, with no employment prospects in your future. You are acquainted with warfare

REBEL
It has been a long road, sometimes lonely, but you've learned that fighting the system alone isn't just deadly, it doesn't work. Now, you have a network, a network of like-minded friends, family, and groups that are willing to help.

WAGE SLAVE
You put in a lot of work for someone else, slaving away so they could profit off of your labor. While you didn't make much more than you needed to live (if that), you did pick up some contacts and skills along the way. Define the job you hold or held.

YOJIN APPRENTICE
Whether you became a Yojin yourself or not, you studied under a Master. You are familiar with Yojin teachings and especially familiar with one of the five Yojin elemental ways. Choose the element your monastery was aligned with.

STEP 3: CHOOSE CASTE

Caste in Neo Babylon is your status in life—it determines not just your wealth but what jobs are available to you, where you can live, what amenities you have access to, and even what laws apply to you and what rights you have when charged with a crime.

By default, your caste is the caste of your community, but you may decide to be above or below that if it fits your character concept—you might be a particularly down on their luck member of your community, or have some unique form of privilege. See Caste (pg 78) for more detailed descriptions of the different castes.

Caste affects your starting Fortune as follows:

- **Undercity Caste:** +10 Bonus Fortune
- **Lower Caste:** +5 Bonus Fortune
- **Lower-Middle Caste:** Normal starting Fortune
- **Upper-Middle Caste:** -10 starting Fortune
- **Upper Caste:** -30 starting Fortune
- **Elite Caste:** -125 starting Fortune

As part of picking caste, take a brief moment to describe where you live and what it's like there.

Castes and Bonus Fortune

Subversion assumes that all characters bring an equal amount to the table, regardless of their background. Higher Caste provides a number of bonuses to characters that makes their lives easier and allows them to use money and status to solve problems. To balance this out, lower caste characters get bonus starting Fortune. This represents that in order to get as far as their higher caste compatriots, they needed to work harder and be more capable.

STEP 4. CHOOSE IDEOLOGY AND VALUES

Ideology and Values are the fundamental beliefs of the PC. They guide the PC's behavior and frame how the PC decides right and wrong. Ideology and Values CAN be contradictory, whether slightly or directly. Ideology and Values influence what decisions a character makes as well as providing a drive to the character—a character that consistently lives up to their beliefs gain Grit, while those that betray them lose Grit (see "Values" on pg 29). First, choose an ideology, then choose Values.

IDEOLOGY

Every Envoy brings with them their own set of beliefs and opinions about the world (and how it might be made better). Centered around the Envoy movement (though Factions are made up in large part of non-envoys), these (often competing) core beliefs have settled into a number of Ideological blocs which push towards a slightly different aim. Most Envoys are aligned with one of these ideologies, representing the values and approach they're most aligned with. Ideologies serve both as a personal Value, but also as a network Envoys may rely on for help if need be. Each Ideology has an associated Value and Faction.

NEO-ANARCHIST

No one should be coerced into following or providing aid to any person or organization against their will, and society should be constructed based on voluntary contributions. Often called nomastics because of their "no masters" rallying cry.

Value: I will strive to give everyone the ability to choose their own life absent of any external edicts or expectations.

NEO-ANARCHIST FACTION

The Neo-Anarchist Faction doesn't provide any organized services—instead it focuses on making sure that requests for help go to its members, who can then choose to come to the aid of other Neo-Anarchists.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Neo-Anarchists	Connection (Faction)	5	5	Influence

AIDERS

We will provide the aid we can to the people who need it most. By focusing on alleviating suffering and material deprivation, we will advance society as a whole.

Value: I will always provide the aid I can to the people who need it most.

AIDER FACTION

The Aider Faction centers around networks of care, and a large proportion of the Aiders are medical professionals in some manner or another ready to provide medical or humanitarian care to whoever needs it, though there are also a decent minority of civil engineers, emergency responders, and more.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Aiders	Care (Faction)	5	5	Science

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONIST

All laws must be derived from democratically elected bodies. We will seek to consolidate as much power and as many decisions as possible in democratically governed institutions that are responsible to their communities and stakeholders.

Value: I will always seek to empower the will of the majority over the interests of the few.

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONIST FACTION

More so than any other Faction, the Democratic Revolutionists are evangelists, attempting to go community by community, workplace by workplace and convince them to unite around a vision of their collective will. While unions and town councils have

little official recognition in Neo Babylon, democratic organizations emerge, often informally or in secret, working to coordinate action and apply pressure on the powers above them.

Absent any legal heft, democratic revolutionist cells only work when they achieve near universal consent. The net result is that the Democratic Revolutionists get a wide range of talents, at the cost of any single focus or specialty.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Democratic Revolutionist	Melting Pot (Faction)	5	5	-

SUNLIGHTERS

Corruption, backroom dealing, and propaganda are the biggest impediment to a better society. We'll uncover and disseminate evidence of corruption and make sure the truth is available to everyone.

Value: I will always expose corruption and exemplify transparency when wielding power.

SUNLIGHTER FACTION

If you weren't an investigative journalist before joining the Sunlighters, you are after, at least in spirit. Sunlighters develop deep networks of contacts, sources, and allied breachers to uncover information and share it with the world.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Sunlighters	Information: Politics (Faction)	5	5	Humanities

CONSECRATED

We should seek divine wisdom and follow the teachings of sacred beings. Only by forging a connection to the gods and embodying their teachings will we make our world a better place.

Value: I will always seek to better understand the wisdom of the gods and act according to their teachings.

CONSECRATED FACTION

The Consecrated Faction is primarily composed of Baru and other chosen, though other devout individuals often are members of the group. Altogether, this makes the faction a font of information about magic and religion, as well as a source for those needing sacred magic.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Conse-crated	Information: Religion (Faction)	5	5	Magic Arts

TECHNOLOGIST

Society must sever all dependencies on magic. Magic is inherently unequal, and only by building a society where all needs can be met without magic can we make a society where everyone can be equal.

Value: I will always seek to provide people with the technology they need to survive and thrive.

TECHNOLOGIST FACTION

Technologists are at their heart techno-optimists, and as such find their ranks full of engineers, breachers, and jumpers. The Technologists are always ready to help each other out with a technical problem.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Technologist	Service (Faction)	5	5	Tech

ENLIGHTENED

Society is no more than the sum of its parts… so to improve society we need to start with giving people the tools to achieve mental and spiritual strength and knowledge to enable them to reach their potential.

Value: I will always seek to better myself and aid others in becoming the best versions of themselves.

ENLIGHTENED FACTION

The enlightened faction focuses on self improvement and inspiring others. Among its ranks are a wide range of artists, Yojin, philosophers, and teachers—all ready to help anyone else learn something.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Enlight-ened	Teacher: Inspire* (see pg 141) (Faction)	5	2	Arts*

* Enlightened members self organize into small groups of similar skills. As such, each member may pick a primary skill and paradigm ability when they join the enlightened. This may be changed any time Regard with the enlightened is improved.

UNBOUND

Any laws that exist except to protect the life and property of others are unjust, and we must enable a society where everyone is free of external impositions on them and are empowered to support themselves.

Value: I will never respect any unjust law and fight any attempts to restrict the rights of people to do as they choose.

UNBOUND FACTION

The Unbound are openly hostile to most laws and restrictions, and as such host a wide range of illegal goods and services (as long as they don't directly harm a non-consenting party). This manifests most directly in an easy network of drugs, though it's not hard to find Unbound willing to deal in weapons, criminal tools, and more. While overlapping substantially with the beliefs of Neo Anarchists, Unbound tend to range from indifference to skepticism on any efforts to support people or build even voluntary institutions beyond those necessary to protect individual freedom.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Unbound	Dealer: Drugs (Faction)	5	5	Science

GREASER

Greasers (though many prefer to call themselves institutionalists) get their name because they believe that Envoys exist just to help make the system work a little more smoothly. A greaser believes the system usually works, and that working with (or for) the government, corporations, and other authorities is the best path to a better world. Many other Envoys are suspicious of greasers, viewing them (often correctly) as paid plants by the powers that be.

Value: I will always seek to make the system work better.

GREASER FACTION

Greasers don't directly band together, instead focusing on representing the government, corporations, or whoever else exerts the most power on the community. This gives them inroads into that authority, and makes it easier to smooth over issues and try and make win-win compromises that solve the issue while keeping the status-quo intact.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Authority*	*	*	+2	*

* Pick one neutral or adversarial Faction for your Community with a Power greater than your Community that you are affiliated with—gain +2 Regard with that Faction.

MILITARY REVOLUTIONISTS

Military Revolutionists, also known as Insurgents or Boom-nicks, aren't an official ideological Faction—members are considered terrorists and certainly aren't afforded the protections of Envoys. Military Revolutionists believe in armed revolution against the Lawjacks and Ukkim, and organize sporadic attacks against the Ukkim. Envoys aligned with the Military Revolutionists typically pretend to be independents or cynics.

Value: I will do whatever it takes to break the control of the Ukkim and other authoritarian regimes.

MILITARY REVOLUTIONIST FACTION

Military revolutionists work together in networks of small cells, with a few carefully guarded channels to procure weapons and explosives for those ready to stage attacks.

Who	Archetype	Power	Regard	Primary Skill
Military Revolutionists	Dealer: Weapons (Faction)	5	5	Ranged Combat

INDEPENDENT

The world is complicated, and all of the blocs are a little bit right and a little bit wrong. The only thing to do is whatever I think is right in a given circumstance. Alternatively, you may be beholden to another group, authority, or person in your life, and the Envoy movement isn't your primary concern. Independent Envoys pick one additional personal Value (see below). An Independent Envoy gains 10 Fortune they may spend on relations.

CYNIC

You may be an Envoy, but you don't believe anyone that tells you that the Envoys can change the world. You were asked, appointed, or told to be an Envoy, and you'll do your job, but you may have ulterior motives, serve another cause, or simply not care. Cynic Envoys pick one additional personal Value (See below). Your cynicism makes it harder to trick you: a cynic gains +1 Vigilance.

VALUES

In addition to the beliefs that line up with their ideology, each character has three additional personal beliefs.

PCs may choose Values from the examples below or create their own.

Values should include "I will" statements. They can be whatever you want, but they should have an actionable quality to them so it is clear when they are being followed or broken. There is usually a belief behind the action-oriented Value, and a player is encouraged to explore that! But all that is necessary for character creation is the "I will" value itself.

CORRUPTED STARTING VALUE

Players may pick one corrupted Value (see pg 29) instead of a normal Value at character creation—doing so gives them 5 bonus Fortune.

Example Values

I will serve the teachings of my faith before any other person, place or thing, even family.

I will not waste anything.

I will not give my trust to anyone unless they earn it.

I will survive.

I will not concern myself with others who are weak or need help.

I will accept whatever happens and not try to change it.

I will do whatever I feel like in the moment

I will act to create a verdant environment and oppose environmental harm.

I will always put my community/people first.

I will always help those in need.

I will never kill someone.

I will do everything I can to help a child or children, even at risk of me and my community.

I will never steal, and oppose those who do.

I will always get paid for my work.

I will show devotion to those who act with kindness towards me

I will not go back to purgatorium

STEP 5: CHOOSE IMPULSE

If Values are a character's motivations driven by their beliefs, Impulses are the subconscious motivations driven by their wants, fears, and desires. Impulses serve as a coping method for dealing with Health, Animity, or Grit loss which may be helpful in the short term, but may cause or reflect deeper harm. For most, Impulses are a manageable part of their life, a tendency balanced by moderation and other drives in their life. For others, however, Impulses are core to a self-destructive spiral, a compulsive behavior whose short term benefits are outweighed by the long term damage it does to themselves and the people around them.

Each character chooses one Impulse. See Impulses (see pg 27) for more details.

STEP 6. DRAMATIC HOOKS

Each PC picks two **Dramatic Hooks** for their characters – motivations and situations particular to them that drive their story. These hooks can take the form of missions they are on, recurring problems they are seeking to overcome, or even a tragic flaws that drive the story arcs of their character. Hooks serve as a signal to the GM, letting them know what sort of stories you're most interested in playing when events focus on your PC—be creative, and choose whatever you think will make the story you're most excited about!

Whenever your dramatic hooks becomes relevant in a game, both you and the GM gain 3 Grit.

Dramatic hooks can come in a wide range of forms. Below are some examples:

- I want to find out what happened to my missing sister
- I want to become a master Yojin
- I need to find a way to get an expensive medical treatment for my son
- My granddaughter has gotten in trouble with her involvement in the Bravia crime family and I need to bail her out

- I keep making horrible romantic decisions and leaving a trail of exes that are causing me problems
- I want to find the lost city that my mother never could
- I want to prove that Dynacorp was responsible for the dam breaking and make them pay
- My character wants to get paid (but I want them to realize they actually care about stuff)
- My character is determined to take down the system or die trying (and if they do go, I want them to do so dramatically)

Changing Dramatic Hooks

During Reflection or Downtime, if it feels like your character has grown or changed in such a way that a dramatic hook no longer make sense (or you just are no longer enjoying it!), talk with the group or GM and change it. Sometimes, achieving a mission is the catalyst for this kind of reflection and change!

Step 7. Choose Relations

Here, players determine their connections to other NPCs in the world. Each player may spend 30 Fortune to buy Relations from the Relation Paradigm (see "Relation Paradigms" on pg 132). This Fortune is not included in the starting 230 Fortune and cannot be spent on other resources, though additional Fortune may be added to upgrade or add additional Relations.

Each Relation has 5 key details: Who they are, what Archetype they have (pg 121), their Power (how competent they are or how much power they have, pg 120) their Base Regard (measuring how much they like you, (pg 121), and their Primary Skill (what they're best at).

Once a player has selected their Relations, they should jot down a few specific details about each Relation to make clear who the Relation is and how they connect to the player character. As part of this process, players should feel free to tweak who they are and what their primary skill and archetype are.

With GM permission, you may leave some Relation Fortune unspent at character creation, spending it at a later date as you flesh out your character and their relationship to the world.

Step 8. Choose Debt

A **Debt** is the catchall for anything you owe to someone else in exchange for some benefit (often but not always monetary). Characters may take up to 2 Debts. When you gain a Debt, you must choose a Relation you are indebted to—this must be a Relation that you have a positive Base Regard with.

Upon taking a Debt, you immediately gain Fortune corresponding to the Fortune gain for your caste.

At the end of each Downtime (see pg 36), you must pick one of the following options for each debt you have:

- Pay Fortune equal to the Fortune gain for your current caste plus interest and remove the debt.
- Pay the interest for your current caste (in Fortune).
- Decrease the benefits of your caste by one step (Lower Caste or above). This may only be done once per Downtime.
- Decrease the Base Regard of your debt holder by 5 and give the GM 5 Grit. You may not do this if it would bring their Base Regard to below -15. This will likely cause the debt holder to contact you and cause problems in your life.
- Take an additional point of debt, if you have 2 or fewer points of debt.
- Permanently decrease your caste by one. This decreases the maintenance and Fortune required to pay off your debt.

Caste	Fortune Gain upon taking Debt	Interest per Downtime
Undercity	1	1
Lower Caste	2	1
Lower-Middle Caste	5	2
Upper-Middle Caste	10	3
Upper Caste	20	5
Elite Caste	50	10

STEP 9. CHOOSE ATTRIBUTE RANK

Attributes represent the innate aptitudes of people in different domains, be it physical or mental. Most people in Subversion have Attributes between 0-2, and all PCs begin with Attributes of zero (unless their identity choices raised them). Ranks of 3 or above represent those who have trained their body and mind purposefully. The highest Attribute a PC can have in Subversion is 7. When making skill Tests, the relevant Attribute value will give a bonus equal to the Attribute rank to the result. No Attributes can be higher than 4 at character creation, regardless of lineage or origin options.

Each character has the following Attributes, which serve as a measure of their general abilities and add to the results of Tests.

Brawn (BRW) is an abstraction of physical strength and toughness.

Agility (AGI) represents a character's reflexes and quickness.

Wit (WIT) can represent intelligence, education, street smarts, or critical thinking.

Awareness (AWA) is a PC's ability to observe and process the world around them and make connections and responses.

Will (WIL) represents the ability to resist temptation and persevere under non-physical threats and temptations.

Charisma (CHA) contains, but isn't limited to, the ability to look good, persuade others, and otherwise socially affect the world.

To raise Attributes above their base value during character creation, spend Fortune according the Raising Attribute Ranks table. The default allocation of Fortune to Attributes is 80 Fortune—several ways of determining this are listed below.

Raising Attribute Ranks

Attributes must be purchased 1 rank at a time. The Fortune cost of moving up a rank is presented below.

0 to 1	5 Fortune
1 to 2	10 Fortune
2 to 3	15 Fortune
3 to 4	25 Fortune
4 to 5	35 Fortune
5 to 6	50 Fortune
6 to 7	65 Fortune

Attribute Arrays

The following arrays are examples of how a player can spend 80 Fortune in a variety of ways. Simply chose an option and assign the various Attribute ranks to any of the 6 Attributes. If a lineage/origin options adjusts your Attribute before purchasing Attributes, refund your character either 5 Fortune for a +1 in an Attribute or 15 Fortune for a +2, and spend those Fortune points elsewhere or save them for later.

	Attribute 1	Attribute 2	Attribute 3	Attribute 4	Attribute 5	Attribute 6
Option 1:	3	2	2	2	1	0
Option 2:	3	3	2	1	0	0
Option 3:	4	1	1	1	1	1
Option 4:	4	2	1	1	0	0

STEP 10. CHOOSE SKILLS

Skills represent training and knowledge a PC may possess and apply to resolve specific problems. Skills are intentionally broad. They allow the creation of competent PCs with the skills needed to navigate the world. It is generally assumed that your PC has the basic tools needed to accomplish tasks that fall under one of their skills and that they have the general knowledge of how to accomplish those tasks as needed.

All PCs start **Untrained** in every skill. This represents the basic knowledge that anyone gets growing up in the world, but lacking an specific talent. Even Untrained, you can assume your PCs has the general life skills and knowledge required to live and move in a society—a character Untrained in Piloting can be assumed to be able to drive to work without needing to make any rolls. Some characters are particularly inept at specific skills—see Inept (pg 131). Skills used while Untrained gain two instances of Dulled.

Becoming **Trained** (Rank 0) in a skill requires 15 Fortune. Each additional rank requires an additional 15 Fortune, and allows the character to roll an additional die on all Tests with the skill. Players may not start with higher than Rank 2 at character creation.

Given the default amount to spend on skills (165 Fortune), you can choose 11 ranks of skills to distribute. **We recommend raising 1 skill to Rank 2 (45 Fortune), 2 skills to Rank 1 (60 Fortune), and 4 other skills to Rank 0 (60 Fortune).**

Skill Descriptions

See Skills (see pg 15) for more detailed descriptions of each of the skills:

- **Arts:** The ability to create art and other creative and inspirational endeavors
- **Deception:** The ability to convince others of things that are untrue
- **Humanities:** The understanding of history, social sciences, law, and current events
- **Influence:** The ability to persuade and inspire others
- **Magic Arts:** The ability to understand (and possibly use) magic
- **Melee Combat:** The ability to fight in close quarters
- **Observation:** The ability to notice details, lies, and other hidden things
- **Physicality:** The ability to perform physical actions such as sneaking, climbing, sleight of hand, or acrobatics
- **Piloting:** The ability to control a vehicle or ride a creature
- **Ranged Combat:** Skill with firearms, bows, and thrown weapons
- **Sciences:** Understanding of science and medicine
- **Tech:** The ability to build, repair, and operate technical devices, including engineering, normal computer use, and breaching

STEP 11. CHOOSE PARADIGMS

Paradigms represent archetypes, professions, or thematic groups of abilities that PCs have. Beyond skills and Attributes, they are more particular and may enhance skills or add new abilities. By default, players have 60 Fortune to spend on Paradigms at character generation. Characters may choose to spend Fortune on any number of paradigms.

A full list of Paradigms can be found in Paradigms (pg 124).

STEP 12: PURCHASE GEAR

The next step is to purchase gear. The default allocation gives players 10 Fortune to spend on gear. See Gear (pg 99) for more details.

STEP 13. FINISHING TOUCHES

If at any point you have leftover Fortune, you can spend it now. You can save up to 5 Fortune to be spent later (these points are part of the default allocation).

There are some special Attributes, such as defenses and condition, that are derived from previous steps. Calculate them now (being sure to add any bonuses or penalties from your choices).

DEFENSES

Defenses measure how your PC manages to avoid or absorb imminent danger or distress.

Characters may also rely on Armor or Adamant to protect against Health and Animity damage. By default these start at zero, but some abilities and gear may increase these.

Guard (Physical) (Agility x 2 +8): This Defense takes into account your awareness and presence of mind to get out of the way of oncoming attacks. You get out of the opponent's way.

Vigilance (Mental) (Wit x 2 +8): This is the mental Defense; Quick thinking and quick acting. When you're alert you anticipate and plan. You outsmart the opponents or refuse to be tricked. This is also your ability to notice the hard to see and perceive the world around you.

Aegis (Spiritual/Magic) (Awareness x 2 +8): The soul/magic Defense; mystic attacks and soul-damaging attacks are resisted with this. Your connection to yourself protects you.

INITIATIVE

Your initiative score is equal to Agility x 3 + Awareness x 2 + Wit.

CONDITION

Health, Animity, and Grit all represent your character's current condition (physical and non-physical) to face different types of adversity.

Health: Health represents how much physical harm your body can take before giving out. Your maximum Health is equal to Brawn x 4 +12.

Animity: Animity represents how much mental stress and effort your psyche can take before giving out. Your maximum Animity is equal to Charisma x 4 + 12.

Grit: Grit represents that hard to define quality that makes people able to remain resolute even through the toughest of times. It is heart, determination, anger, resolve, and a bit of emotional health all rolled up into one. PCs start with a Grit of Will +6.

LANGUAGES

Choose 2 languages from the following list:

- **CommonUr:** The lingua franca of Neo Babylon, and hence the world, its spoken by almost all inhabitants of Neo Babylon.
- **NobleUr:** Derived from ancient Akkadian, it remains in practice for many forms of high literature and scholarship.
- **Chaldani:** A hodgepodge mix of languages from across Erebu and North Atlantica, Chaldani is the primary language of Acape Anya.
- **La-Churuq:** A glottal language spoke in the goblin nation of Churuq, as well as much of South Atlantica.
- **Ghassulian:** More than perhaps any language besides CommonUr, Ghassulian words have spread across the world, carried by Tulko merchants, who still use the language among themselves (and is known by many others seeking to make a good impression on them).
- **Altaipheran:** The language of Altaiphera and the UYC, Altaipheran is difficult for non-yettin to pronounce properly.
- **Fae:** While the connection of the Fae language, like most things attributed to the Fae, is unclear, Fae is the preferred tongue in Val Broceliande.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST SESSION

Before your first session we recommend that you take a moment to briefly discuss your character with the other members of your group. In particular, we recommend briefly talking about the following points

- How (if they do already) do the characters know each other?
- Do they have any mutual Relations or other connections?
- What goals, Values, and dramatic hooks do they have (and how might these mesh or lead to interesting conflicts)?
- How do each character's abilities and weaknesses interact, and are there any important skills or abilities that can't be covered by any character or their relations?

This discussion might inspire you to make some small tweaks—feel free to do so!

ADVANCEMENT

After each session, PCs will earn a certain amount of Fortune. This Fortune can be spent on Attributes (up to rank 7), Skills (up to rank 6), Gear, and Paradigms, just as it can be spent during character generation. See Reflection (pg 38) for more details.

Sample Connections

The party's connections determine what makes them a group—and crucially what keeps them as a group. Each player should have at least one connection to other members of the group, possibly many more! Before moving on to the next step, make sure that everyone is connected to each other, either directly or indirectly.

Assigned: Sometimes you don't have a choice who you work with, and many communities will select the best Envoys for the job regardless of their connections to each other. You're expected to work together for the goals of the community, not because of any other relationship you have with other members of the party (that's not to say that you don't have other relations!)

Debt: You owe them, either by society's reckoning or just your own. You help out another member of the team because you feel the obligation to repay a debt to them or their family.

Family: Blood is thicker than water—that's what you believe at least. You work together because you've got your family's back, and you're not about to let them do things alone.

Friendship: You stick with each other because you've stuck with each other so far, and you have each other's backs—or at least you like hanging out and working together.

Shared Purpose: You might not know each other well, but you know that you're working towards the same goal, and you'll welcome any help towards that end.

Gear

Gear represents the unique tools and equipment that makes you stand out. Most of your possessions are assumed based on your Caste (pg 78), but gear represents unique or important items that give a benefit to your character.

The default allocation gives each character 10 Fortune to spend on gear.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS

Many pieces of gear have gear enhancements: optional modifications that cost additional Fortune for an additional benefit. Unless otherwise specified, each piece of gear may only have one gear enhancement.

CASTE GEAR

Each character starts with the following basic gear based on their Caste. Additionally, they possess any mundane objects of quantities and qualities consistent with their caste.

UNDERCITY

- Communal/neighborhood C-link. This is how most communication with outsiders happens.
- Backpack of clothing (may be ill-fitting, torn, patchwork)

LOWER CASTE

- Paylo
- Transit Pass (Mass Transit)
- Small closet of clothing (may be in disrepair)

LOWER-MIDDLE

- Personal halo
- Transit Pass (Rideshare)
- Rented Commuter Bike
- Small closet of clothing (decent)

UPPER-MIDDLE

- Personal halo
- Transit Pass (Driver Service)
- Basic Car (lease)
- Many options of clothing

UPPER

- Halogram
- Leased Luxury Car (Car or Truck <=30 Fortune)
- Transit Pass (Flying Taxi)

ELITE

- Halogram
- Leased VTOL
- Transit Pass (Jet)
- Vehicle Service

ELECTRONICS AND SOFTWARE

HALOS

The halo (Handheld Link Organizer) is the all in one computer, communication device, media player and wallet. Several varieties exist, largely stratified by caste. Most halos are roughly hand sized. Halos have a maximum range of 5000m, however most urban areas have publicly accessible long distance relays (see below) that allow users to reach anywhere in the world.

PAYLO

1 Fortune.

Low end halos, colloquially known as "paylos" for their dirt cheap prices, can be bought at every store or C-link. Interacting with them relies on low-resolution touch-screens, speakers, and microphones. Sold at a loss, they make it up by steering the user towards buying certain products and selling their information. Notoriously cheap and insecure, they're nonetheless the mainstay of those who can't afford better. *Security Rating 8, Firewall 0.*

PERSONAL HALO

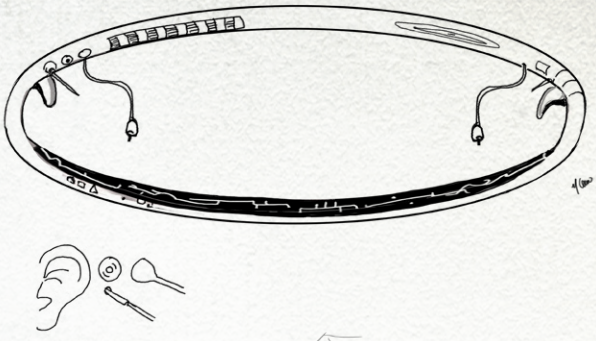
2 Fortune.

Personal halos are the broad category of halos marketed to the average user. Personal halos can be used via touching the screen, but are far more commonly used via connections to smart glasses and earbuds to provide augmented reality interfaces and overlays, though they can also be used via cybertech implants. Personal halos advertise greater security to those who have a digital life valuable enough to attract rogue breachers. *Security Rating 12, Firewall 5.*

HALOGRAM

3 Fortune.

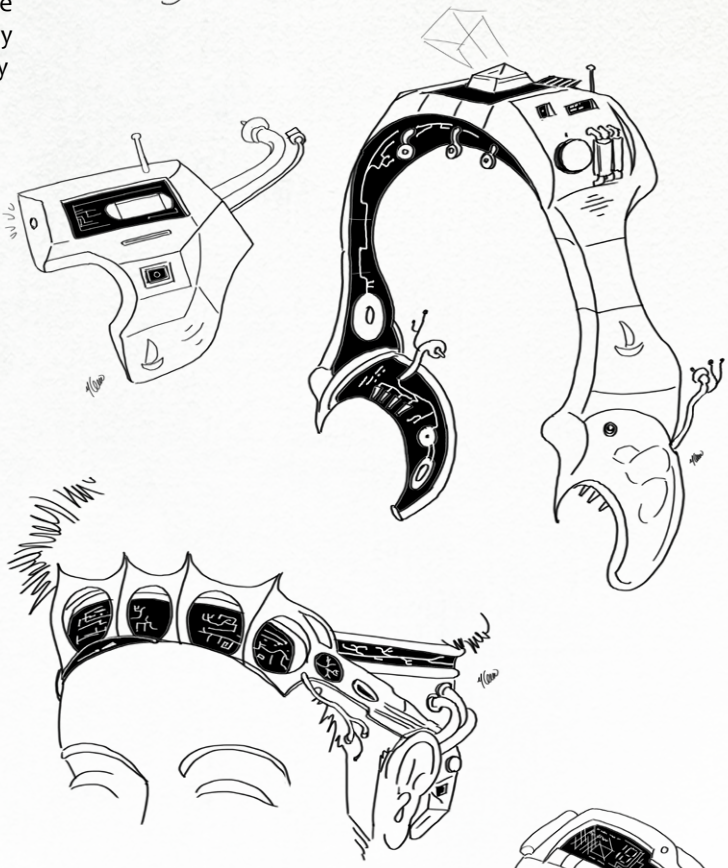
Halograms, named for their lack of physical interface and presence only in augmented reality, are the category of high-end halos used by those who can spare no expense for the smoothest experience possible, require the utmost security in protecting their digital life and identity, or merely wish to prove that they're rich enough to buy the most recent halogram. Halograms are frequently designed as jewelry, glasses, watches, or directly implanted as cybertech, and rarely interacted with directly as physical objects. *Security Rating 16, Firewall 10.*



GRAYLO

3 Fortune.

Designed less for everyday use, these gray-market halos are optimized for anonymity. Of similar form factor to normal personal halos, graylos are loaded with a single fake identity, complete with supporting identification, records, and history. You automatically can pass yourself off as that identity to any automated system, and gain a +4 on any other Deception Tests to pass yourself off as that alternative identity. *Security Rating 14, Firewall 10.*

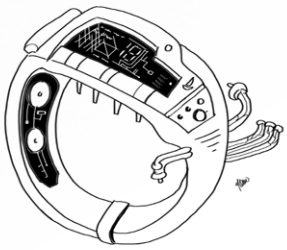


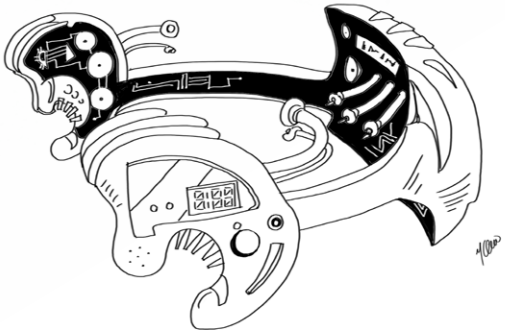
HARDWARE

LONG DISTANCE RELAY

1 Fortune.

The average halo can communicate to other devices with a range of 5000m. Long Distance Relays are connected to wired connections or satellite links to allow connections anywhere in the globe. Most urban areas have a number of public Long Distance Relays, usable by anyone, however those heading out into sparsely populated areas may find it useful to bring their own satellite enabled Long Distance Relay. Long Distance relays collapse to the size of a briefcase, and are about 1 m in diameter when deployed.





REMOTE SERVER

4 Fortune.

You have a connection to a remote server (see "Servers" on pg 53) capable of complicated data analysis and simulation. You gain +2 on all Science Tests in Dramatic or Downtime scenes, and such tasks take half the time. Additionally, you may use the server as a private Virtual Reality place for digital meetings. *Security Rating 12, Firewall 15.*

Software

Universal Translator

2 Fortune.

This software provides a serviceable translation for any common language. You may understand and make yourself understood in any common language, however you are at a -2 on any Tests relying on the software for communication.

Gear Enhancements (Pick up to 1)

- **Holistic Awareness:** Your software is able to synthesize context from a whole message, boosting its ability to translate. Reduce the penalty to -1 for translating any text or electronic documents *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Universal Semantics:** You take no penalty communicating with someone else with their own Universal Translator, providing both of you have used your translator for at least one Downtime *(1 Fortune)*.

Artists' Aids

2 Fortune.

You have sophisticated software that allows you to quickly lay down the basics of your art. Your Art Tests gain Reliable 2, and any compositions take half as long to create.

Gear Enhancements (Pick any)

- **Distribution Network:** You have the equipment to widely distribute digital copies of your art and make buzz. Gain +1d6 on all Arts Tests to influence people not in your immediate vicinity. *(4 Fortune)*.
- **AI Drafting:** You have AI tools that can instantly produce competent, if derivative, art based on a handful of cues. Increase the bonus from your Aids to Reliable 3, and you may divide the time to produce a piece of art by 10 by gaining the Dulled keyword on the Test *(2 Fortune)*.

Reference Library

4 Fortune.

You have access to well annotated library of resources you can use to help answer questions, provided you have the time to use it. Gain +1 dice on all Humanities Tests done in Dramatic or Downtime scenes.

Gear Enhancements (Pick any)

- **Specialized Topic:** Pick one specific topic (such as Law, History, or Culture). You gain an additional +1 dice on Tests related to that topic. This may be picked multiple times, choosing a different topic each time *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Scientific Library:** Your Library also gives a bonus to Science Tests *(2 Fortune)*.
- **Collaborative Research:** Your Library has built in tools for others to access. Any number of characters may benefit from this ability at the same time, and any teamwork Tests using the library are Inspired. *(2 Fortune)*.

Catalog of Things

3 Fortune.

This AR software identifies man-made objects and provides information about where they are made, sold, how they are used, and any cultural connotations of them. Gain Reliable 3 on all Humanities Tests to identify objects.

Species Identifier

3 Fortune.

This AR software identifies species and provides helpful information about them. Gain Reliable 3 on all Science Tests to identify living creatures.

Digit-Alter

2 Fortune.

This gray-market software is common among forgers, and contains copies of official documents and their security measures as well as the tools to rapidly make convincing forgeries. Gain +2 on all Deception Tests to make forgeries.

Digital Presence

2 Fortune.

You've invested heavily in your communications gear, and are Inspired on all Influence Tests done remotely.

TOOLS, SCIENCE, AND MEDICINE

MASTERPIECE IMPLEMENT

5 Fortune.

You have a tool, instrument, or other piece of gear that is a work of art on its own right. When using this implement, your Arts Tests are Inspired.

PORTABLE LABORATORY

2 Fortune.

You have a collection of sensors, microscopes, reference materials, and more that you can whip out whenever a scientific question arises. Gain +1 on all Science Tests to analyze something the character can directly inspect.

MEDKIT

4 Fortune.

A quick-acting cybertech kit that diagnoses and heals injury on the spot. Target regains 2d6 Health. A character may spend 1 Grit while applying a medkit to make a Science skill Test, in this case heal damage equal to the result of the skill Test. Once a character has benefited from a medkit, they may not gain Health from a medkit until the end of the next Downtime Phase.

DRUGS

The knowledge of advanced pharmaceuticals was developed over millennia by mages of the alchemical colleges, however widespread drug use only emerged with the ability of pharmaceutical companies to replicate these formulas and mass produce the relevant compounds. Nominally tightly controlled, drugs with legitimate medical uses and useful performance enhancing qualities are readily available to those with the right licenses, and alchemical mages can synthesize many of the most common compounds.

ADDICTION TESTS

Most drugs are addictive. At the beginning of each Downtime Phase, make an **Addiction Test** by rolling 3 dice, plus one for each dose of the drug past the first you've taken since the start of the last Downtime Phase (keeping the highest three as per normal). If the result is higher than your Vigilance, you gain an Indulgence (pg 27) Impulse for that drug. If you fail and you're already addicted to the drug, the character instead takes 5 Animity damage. Each drug provides guidance for triggers specific to that drug. Some drugs modify the Test, making it easier or harder to become addicted.

DRUG PROPERTIES

Drugs have two properties:

- **Onset:** How long it takes a drug to kick in
- **Duration:** How long the drug lasts

COMMON DRUGS

FLOW

1 Fortune (Covers all doses taken until the next Downtime). Onset: 1 minute. Duration: 12 Hours

Perhaps the most common drug, at least among corporate enclaves and the upper class, flow induces a hyper-focused state, enabling the user to focus on a task to the exclusion of any distractions such as food, rest, or bathrooms (it's understandably important to set alarms for scheduled bodily function breaks).

While under the effects of flow, characters gain Reliable 3 on all Tests requiring concerted focus, however they gain two instances of Dulled on all Observation Tests on things they aren't focusing on. While under the effect of flow, a character cannot sleep, however, time under the influence of flow does not count towards time awake for the purposes of needing sleep.

Longterm use of flow can be destabilizing. Each dose (12 hours) causes 2 Irresistible Animity damage.

A character who uses flow during the Downtime Phase gains an extra Downtime Action if they forgo rest (see "Downtime Actions" on pg 27). A character who uses flow to gain an extra Downtime Action takes an additional 3 Irresistible Animity damage (this counts as 3 doses for the purpose of addiction Tests).

FLOW ADDICTION

Addicts to flow find it harder to focus without Flow and find it hard to maintain a normal sleep schedule. Flow addiction is often triggered when a character is tired or needs to focus on something. If the character does not partake of Flow, they gain two instances of Dulled on all tasks requiring concentration.

GOD TEARS

1 Fortune. Onset: Immediate. Duration: 1 hour.

Originally part of the sacred practice of some Northern Yettin, God Tears come from a rare mushroom traditionally dissolved in sea water. Applied to the eyes, God Tears make Shinesight (see "Shine Perception" on pg 61) easier, giving the character Reliable 3 on all Shinesight Tests, and gain Inspired on all Magic Arts Tests. The character, however, may not stop looking at the shine for the duration of the high.

God Tears have no effect on characters with cyber eyes.

GOD TEAR ADDICTION

While not particularly addictive per se, characters who abuse God Tears find it harder and harder to ignore the patterns of magic and focus on the real world. Whenever there are magical effects, or the character is tired or stressed, God Tear addiction may be triggered to force the character to engage in Shinesight for the rest of the scene.

Whenever a character fails an addiction Test against God Tears, their shinesight becomes stronger. They gain an additional instance of Dulled for all mundane Observation Tests while engaged in Shinesight, but gain a cumulative +1 bonus on all shinesight Tests (maximum +5). Once this bonus reaches +5, the character is always engaged in Shinesight, becoming effectively blind to all but the most obvious nonmagical objects in their vicinity.

KING MUD

2 Fortune. Illicit 2. Onset: Immediate. Duration: 1 Hour.

A brown injected liquid, King Mud has it's origins as an alchemically created combat stimulant, though synthetic formulations are also available. Named for the sense of grandiosity it promotes, those on King Mud gain strength, speed, and a reckless sense of self confidence.

While under the effect of King Mud, a character gains +5 Initiative, Augment 3 on all Melee Attacks, +1 Armor, and Adamant 3. However, the confidence of King Mud makes it difficult for the character to recognize when they're outmatched. A character under the effect of King Mud must spend 5 Grit to retreat or otherwise concede defeat. Another character may attempt to talk them down by succeeding on an Influence Test against their Vigilance as an action.

KING MUD ADDICTION

Those who abuse King Mud become obsessed with their own importance—treat this as gaining the Pride Impulse (see pg 29). Long term use of King Mud is dangerous; whenever a character addicted to King Mud fails an addiction Test against King Mud they take 3 Metabolic damage.

NONCHALANCE

1 Fortune. Onset: 5 minutes. Duration: Special.

Originally developed as a treatment for Post-traumatic stress disorder, Nonchalance removes the emotional valence of recent memories while keeping the factual component of the memories intact. Taken shortly after a traumatic event, Nonchalance can eliminate the psychological effect of trauma.

When a character takes a dose of Nonchalance, they heal up to 5 Animity damage they've taken from traumatic or stressful events since the last time they slept. Multiple doses of Nonchalance stack for the purposes of determining how much Animity damage is healed.

NONCHALANCE ADDICTION

Repeated use of Nonchalance reduces the character's ability to cope with stressful situations. Nonchalance addiction is triggered when a character takes Animity damage, in which case they take an additional 5 Animity damage.

REMEMBRANCE

1 Fortune. Illicit 1. Onset 1 Round. Duration 20 minutes.

Originally developed as a memory enhancing drug for technical workers, Remembrance was only a partial success. When under the effects of Remembrance, a character appears to have perfect episodic recall, able to remember anything that's happened to them in vivid detail, as if they were reliving it. However, while Remembrance can help dig up temporarily forgotten or suppressed memories, truly forgotten details are replaced by plausible hallucinations. These false memories make it of limited use in cases where accuracy is important. While under the effect of Remembrance, a character gains +2 on all Wit linked skill Tests, however all Failures count as Dynamic Failures. The vivid memory hallucinations interfere with other tasks, and the character gains an instance of Dulled for all other tasks.

Where Remembrance gained in popularity, however, is as a recreational drug for the nostalgic. Under the effects of Remembrance, you can relive in seemingly perfect detail your first kiss, happy moments with a deceased love one, what it was like to be young again, or whatever else you might desire. If you spend the duration of the high reminiscing, you can heal 1d6 Animity damage.

REMEMBRANCE ADDICTION

Remembrance addiction is insidious, driven as much by loss and nostalgia as by the chemical component. Remembrance can be triggered whenever a character is reminded of something positive from their past. Repeated use of remembrance makes it hard to recall the emotional component of memories without its use—when a character fails an addiction Test against Remembrance while they are already addicted, they take an additional 1d6 Animity damage.

SACRED BLUE

1 Fortune. Illicit 1. Onset 1 minute. Duration 1 hour.

Derived from the Blue Lotus plant and traditionally distilled into a tea, Sacred Blue triggers a dissociative high, frequently described as a sense of serene calm, enlightenment, or being one with the universe. A character under the effects of Sacred Blue gains Adamant 10, but gains an instance of Dulled on all Tests while under the effect of Sacred Blue.

SACRED BLUE ADDICTION

Sacred Blue addicts struggle to put importance on mundane things, instead preferring to seek enlightenment at the bottom of a cup of tea. Sacred Blue Addiction can be alternatively triggered by difficult or stressful situations in the real world—or boredom!

MAGICAL GEAR

SHALMU

4 Fortune.

An item made to look like the image of one of the great powers, capturing some truth about their nature, forging a mystical connection. It can bring comfort and support to a faithful person, as it is said that a part of the divine dwells in their image. What is done to the image is done to the divine power itself. If the image is mistreated, this may result in a curse. However, it may also be used a single time to channel a sacred spell. As a Main Action, the chosen may use a Shalmu to remove all dissonance from a spell. After its use in this way, it crumbles apart into its base components.

TSERU

2 Fortune.

A Tseru is an enchanted container holding contained arcane mana aligned to a certain type of energy. The type of mana must be specified when purchased, and may not always be available in every store. A mage may use a Tseru to harmonize a bar of mana matching the type of energy as a Free Action, after which the Tseru is spent.

ARTIFICES

Artifices are magical devices powered by arcane magic, reliant on Mana mages with the Artificing ability (see "Artificing" on pg 164). Artifices rely on temporary magical infusions, and are temporary or require the regular attention of a mage to continue functioning. While many types of artifices exist, a few common examples are listed below.

FLOAT STONE

1 Fortune.

By channeling force magic, Float Stones negate nearly all the weight of up to 500kg of objects touching them. Activating a float stone (a TN 12 Magic Arts Test) typically requires tracing a pattern etched into a rock, at which point it renders weightless any person or object touching it, up to the limit. Float Stones remain active until the end of the next Downtime, or until deactivated.

Pull stones, a variant of the float stones, are oblong stones that instead of negating weight, propel an object in the direction they're pointing. When combined with float stones, they can propel an object at up to Speed 4—they can also be used on their own to propel ground or watercraft at Speed 2. While magical craft relying on combination of Float Stones and Pull Stones have largely been supplanted by cars and VTOLs, it is not uncommon to see the occasional antique skybarge or flying carpet above the city of Neo Babylon as an ostentatious display of wealth.

APOTROPAIC AMULET

4 Fortune.

A mainstay of many artificers (as well as many scammers pretending to be artificers), Apotropaic amulets store magic defensive magic to dispel a spell or other magical effect targeting the wielder. As an Interrupt Action, the wielder may trigger the apotropaic amulet to increase their Aegis by 5 for one effect targeting them. If the target is a spell and fails to affect the target, the apotropaic amulet dispels it, ending any ongoing effects and protecting any other targets of the spell.

After being used once, the magic in an apotropaic amulet is spent, and it becomes worthless.

SALVE OF LIFE

1 Fortune.

Made in conjunction with a Mana Mage and Baru of Cultivation, Salves of Life are powerful healing magic used to cure even grievous wounds instantaneously. Make a TN 12 Magic Arts Test, on a Success the target regains 8 Health. A salve of life does not stack with the nurture spell, and a character may only benefit from one salve of life between the end of each Downtime Phase.

A salve of life expires when used or at the end of the next Downtime after it is purchased, whichever happens first.

MAGE GUN

10 Fortune.

The iconic weapon of the Gunmages, the elite fighting force of Neo Babylon, mage guns predate modern gun-powder based weapons, instead relying on stored arcane mana as a source of energy. The effect of a mage gun depends on the type of mana powering it. When taking a Downtime Action, a mage with the Artificing ability can create ten charges of pure mana that act as charges for the gun. The potency of these charges depends on the number of bars the mage can channel.

- **Mana Bar:** 1d6 Metabolic and Animity damage per bar, only to magical characters and creatures. Characters you damage take one instance of Dulled on all Magic Arts Tests until the end of the scene.
- **Force Bar:** 2d6 Physical damage and target is thrown back 2m per each bar.
- **Light Bar:** 1d6 Radiant damage and AP 3 per bar, and all attacks against the target until the end of your next turn gain +1d6 to hit per bar.
- **Chemical Bar:** 2d6 Corrosive damage per bar spent.
- **Storm Bar:** 2d6 Electrical damage per bar spent
- **Fire Bar:** 2d6 Fire damage and one damage to all targets within 3m per bar spent.

Each charge lasts until used or the end of the next Downtime Phase (whichever happens first). Satchels of ten arcane charges are available for purchase at a rate of 1 Fortune per bar of charge. Charges have an illicit value equal to the number of bars of charge.

Mage guns have a range of 50m, the Frightening 8 keyword, and are used with the Ranged Combat skill. Mage guns require attuning with their user. A new weapon requires a Success on a TN 12 Magic Arts Test as a Downtime Action. A previously attuned weapon requires a Test with a TN equal to the attuning Test of the previous user plus 5. In some rare cases, guns that resist attunement may work for those with a Relation to the previous owner—some mageguns trace their lineage through families or generations of masters and students.

While modern technology has obviated the mass production of weak mage gun charges (as bullets are generally more deadly than charges with a single bar), mage guns powered by a master artificer remain some of the deadliest personal weapons in the world, and the Gunmages who rely on these weapons maintain the reputation as some of the most dangerous combatants in the world—both for the weapon itself and the skills that justify being entrusted with a weapon channeling the time and effort of an expert artificer.

ESPIONAGE AND SECURITY

AUTO-INTRUDER

3 Fortune.

This device, commonly appearing as a large marker or pen, is a combination toolkit, lock picks, and automatic breaching device specialized in locks and alarms. Gain Reliable 3 on all Physicality or Tech Tests to bypass locks or other similar security if the character can physically touch them with the auto-intruder. Furthermore, the auto-intruder may be used as a specialized cyberkit, allowing its user to make a Tech Test to breach security systems it's touching (treat this as granting the character a Breach Power of 5).

BUG-SWEEPER

2 Fortune.

This device, roughly the size of a deck of cards, is designed for those paranoid about surveillance. When used as a scanner, it provides +2 on all Tech or Observation Tests to detect bugs. It can additionally be used as a jammer, blocking all devices within 100m from transmitting unless you allow them, or their user succeeds on a TN 14 Tech Test. Finally, this device can use a miniaturized EMP to destroy any small electronics it comes in contact with.

DISGUISE KIT

2 Fortune.

You have a set of cosmetics, clothing, uniforms, wigs, and more to help you disguise yourself. Gain +1 dice on all Deception Tests made as part of passing yourself off as a particular person you've spent time disguising yourself as, or to hide your identity from anyone trying to recognize you.

ELABORATE WARDROBE

2 Fortune.

You have an outfit for every occasion, and then some. Whenever you have time to change outfits to fit a situation, you gain a +1d6 on all Influence Tests, and you never suffer penalties for looking out of place.

MICRO-LINKS

2 Fortune.

The utmost in discreet surveillance, micro-links are multipurpose cameras and microphones roughly 5mm in diameter. This kit comes with 20 micro-links, as well as low-profile contact lenses, earbuds, and sub-vocal microphone. These require a TN 15 Observation Test or Tech Test to detect.

STEALTH SUIT

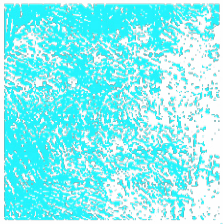
4 Fortune

This sound dampening bodysuit includes a mask and hood covering the face, as well as smart clothing fabric and cameras able to match the rough colors behind it. While not an invisibility suit by any means, it provides a +1d6 bonus on all physicality Tests to be stealthy.

MULTI-MODAL BINOCULARS

4 Fortune.

These binoculars are equipped with wide spectrum sensors allowing them to see in the dark, as well as into the IR and UV spectrum. They additionally include integrated laser microphones and directional microphones, enabling you to hear from far away. You gain +2 on all Observation Tests against a target that you're aware of and actively surveilling, and ignore any penalties based on range as long as you can see your target.



SURVIVAL AND EXPLORATION GEAR

ADVANCED CLIMBING GEAR

2 Fortune.

This gear includes smart adhesive gloves, knee-pads, and shoes, a grappling hook with smart adhesive hooks, a climbing harness, a number of adhesive pitons, and 300 meters of ultra-strong cord capable of supporting up to 1000 kg of weight. Together, these provide a +4 on all physicality Tests related to climbing.

DIVING GEAR

2 Fortune.

This diving suit provides protection from the elements, up to 10 hours of oxygen for breathing with adaptive reclamation of exhaled air and adjustable mixes for diving at depth, illumination, and buoyancy control. It enables the wearer to dive up to 300m below water, and provides Reliable 3 on all Physicality Tests to swim.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

2 Fortune.

This small pack, roughly 10 cm long and weighing 5kg, can automatically inflate to provide protection from the elements. When inflated, the shelter can fit 4 people (2 comfortably, or 1 comfortable yettin). The emergency shelter can float in water, has an integrated climate control system that protects against extreme temperatures, up to and including wildfires. It also includes its own air filtration and oxygen scrubber, as well as water reclamation kit. Finally, the emergency shelter is equipped with bright signal lights to improve visibility for search and rescue as well as an electronic signal beacon. All features function for a week before needing to be recharged.

HAZMAT SUIT

2 Fortune.

This suit provides protection from a wide range of chemical, biological, and radiation hazards. It provides 12 hours of internal oxygen, protection from inhaled toxins, and radiation. Integrated into the suit are Geiger counters and chemical sensors that detect hazards.

Vehicles and Transportation

Transit Pass

In Neo Babylon, most people don't use their own vehicles, instead relying on services of various degrees of amenities, convenience, and speed. All characters of Low Caste or higher possess a transit pass, however the level of service depends on caste. Anyone can use transit of a lower caste.

Mass Transit (Low Caste)

You rely on buses, ferries, trains, subways, and other fixed route mass transportation to get somewhere. While major transit routes (moving in and out of Neo Babylon) are fast and reliable, less well resourced locations have routes that may be infrequent, unreliable, or totally absent—which might involve a lot of walking as well.

Ride Share (Lower-Middle Caste)

While major routes are still more amenable to mass transit, in outlying areas you can rely on multi-passenger taxi services that route you to different locations. Depending on location and luck, getting a ride may take a while, and travel times are unpredictable and depend on other passengers' destinations.

Driver Service (Upper-Middle Class)

Driver services provide private single-customer service direct to their destination in upscale vehicles, and are promptly available on request.

Air Taxi Service (Upper Class)

The favorite in the spires of Neo Babylon, Air Taxis are flying vehicles that provide fast point to point travel anywhere.

Jet Service (Elite)

For those who want to blur the line between travel and luxury, jet services provide fully featured luxury cabins to those desiring to travel anywhere.

Vehicle Service

For those who prefer to pilot themselves, personal vehicles are widely available to purchase (see Vehicles (pg 112). Leasing vehicles is far more common than outright ownership, and most people of lower-middle class or above have access to at least a small electric motorbike (see "Buying and Leasing Vehicles" on pg 112).

COMBAT GEAR

These pieces of gear are used with combat skills or to provide some other bonus in combat.

Weapon Name	Skill	Range	Damage	AP	Other Abilities	Fortune Cost
Unarmed	Melee Combat	T	1d6	-	Add Brawn to Damage	0
Knife	Melee Combat	T	1d6	1	Add half Brawn to damage. Frightening 3	0
Club	Melee Combat	T	2d6	-	Add Brawn to Damage. Conspicuous	0
Sword	Melee Combat	T	3d6	1	Add Brawn to Damage. Conspicuous, Frightening 5	2
Stun Baton	Melee Combat	T	3d6	2	Nonlethal. Electrical, Illicit 1	2
Taser	Ranged Combat	10m	2d6	2	Nonlethal. Electrical	2
Pistol	Ranged Combat	50m	3d6	1	Illicit 2. Frightening 6	3
Rifle	Ranged Combat	200m	5d6	2	Conspicuous. Illicit 3. Frightening 8	5
Single Use Rocket Launcher	Ranged Combat	30-1000m	10d6	5	Conspicuous. Blast. Single Use. Illicit 4. Frightening 10	8

WEAPONS

KNIFE

0 Fortune.

A basic knife is a common and indispensable tool for cutting food or material, but can be surprisingly dangerous in the right hands. When designed as a weapon, knives become even more deadly, while being easy to conceal or light enough to carry as a backup.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Mage Steel:** Originally referring to weapons crafted from alchemically manipulated steel, a few high-tech manufactories have produced comparable products. Add +4 AP *(2 Fortune)*.
- **Concealable:** This weapon is designed to be easily concealable through a combination of design, materials, and size. Increase the TN to find this weapon by 5 *(1 Fortune)*.

CLUB

0 Fortune.

At its simplest, a club is a stick or rod that allows a user to apply significantly more force at the point of impact.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Crafted weapon:** You rely on a carefully crafted weapon such as a tonfa, mace, or baton rather than an improvised club. Do +1d6 damage *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Innocuous Appearance:** Your club takes the form of a cane, equipment stand, or other item unlikely to draw attention in most situations. Lose the Conspicuous keyword *(1 Fortune)*.

SWORD

2 Fortune.

The most iconic archaic weapon, swords persist as status symbols among the wealthy as well as a part of many martial arts traditions.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Mage Steel:** Originally referring to weapons crafted from alchemically manipulated steel, a few high-tech manufactories have produced comparable products. Add +4 AP *(5 Fortune).*
- **Innocuous Concealment:** Your sword is designed to be sheathed as part of a cane, tripod, or other tool that doesn't appear to be a weapon. Lose the conspicuous keyword, gain Illicit 1 *(2 Fortune).*

STUN BATON

2 Fortune, Illicit 1.

The Stun Baton is most prominent as the primary weapon of the Lawjacks, which they are happy to use on anyone who doesn't comply with their orders promptly.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Lethal Override:** Some stun batons have been modded to provide dangerous amount of electricity. Gain +1d6 damage and lose the nonlethal keyword. Illicit 2 *(2 Fortune).*
- **Civilian Baton:** This version is smaller and approved for civilian ownership. Decrease Illicit by 1, but reduce damage to 2d6 *(0 Fortune).*

TASER

2 Fortune.

Tasers are the only legal ranged weapon in Neo Babylon, designed to incapacitate their target with a dart delivering an electrical shock.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Taser Rifle:** A version designed for incapacitating large creatures, it's also commonly used by Lawjack snipers providing overwatch on protests or security. Increase range to 100m and damage to 5d6. Illicit 1 *(2 Fortune).*
- **Lethal Override:** Some tasers have been modded to provide dangerous amount of electricity. Gain +1d6 damage and lose the nonlethal keyword. Illicit 2 *(2 Fortune).*
- **Thorn Darts:** Some tasers are designed with barbed darts that continue to incapacitate their target until the dart is removed. On each subsequent turn, the dart does 1d6 damage. The dart can be removed as a Main Action. Illicit +1 *(1 Fortune).*

PISTOL

3 Fortune, Illicit 2.

Firearms are illegal in Neo Babylon for anyone except Lawjacks and military personnel. Even Lawjacks typically rely on Stun Batons and tasers, with firearms only used when responding to a major threat. Nonetheless, a lucrative arms smuggling trade exists, and firearms are not uncommon among organized crime and factions in the undercity.

Given the general illegality of firearms, pistols are the most common firearm in Neo Babylon due to their relative concealability.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Concealable:** This weapon is designed to be easily concealable through a combination of design, materials, and size. Increase the TN to find this weapon by 5. Illicit +1 *(1 Fortune).*
- **Smart Targeting:** This weapon has integrated targeting systems and an elongated barrel to help the user hit targets, even at extended ranges. Gain Reliable 3 on all attacks within 50m, and increase range to 100m. *(2 Fortune).*
- **Auto Pistol:** This pistol has an automatic feed enabling it to fire at a rapid rate. Gain the Multi-target ability and Reliable 2 on all attacks. Illicit +1 *(2 Fortune).*
- **Heavy Pistol:** This weapon uses larger caliber ammunition to provide increased stopping power. Increase damage by 1d6 and AP by 1. Illicit +1 *(2 Fortune).*
- **Silencer:** This weapon is equipped with a silencer to make less noise when fired. Halve any concealment penalty for using a firearm in combat. Illicit +1 *(2 Fortune).*

RIFLE

5 Fortune, Illicit 3.

Rifles are strongly controlled in Neo Babylon, and almost exclusively produced for Military use, though Lawjack SWAT teams also have access to them. Nonetheless, through a few illegal producers, older weapons from the Fairy Wars, or smuggling from countries or rural areas with weaker gun controls, rifles are available to those with the right connections.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Puzzler:** This rifle is designed to be easily disassembled into parts that are difficult to recognize as firearm parts, and quickly reassembled into a functional weapon. Disassembling and reassembling the weapon requires a TN 10 Tech Test and takes 3 turns. While disassembled, a TN 15 Observation, Ranged Combat, or Tech Test is required to recognize the true nature of the parts. Illicit +1 *(1 Fortune).*

- **Marksman Rifle:** This rifle is designed for hunters and snipers, and has advanced optics and design for targeting at long range. For each aim action on an attack (capped by skill rank) increase the effective range of the weapon by 100m. Illicit +1 *(2 Fortune)*.
- **Assault Rifle:** Optimized for combat at typical military engagement ranges, Assault Rifles are able to switch between semi-automatic fire and burst or automatic fire. Gain Multi-target and Reliable 2. Illicit +1 *(2 Fortune)*.

SINGLE USE ROCKET LAUNCHER

8 Fortune, Illicit 4.

By the end of the second fairy wars, armored vehicles threatened to dominate combat. In response, man portable single use rockets were developed to allow infantry to face tanks and aircraft. Since then, Single Use Rocket Launchers have become the weapon of choice of rebels and guerrillas (be they grass roots resistance or secretly sponsored by corporations or Ukkim). Inevitably, some of these make their way to the black market, and are used by those needing to target vehicles or secure facilities.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Anti-Personnel:** This rocket is designed to fly above an area and rain shrapnel over a large area. Decrease Damage to 8d6 but increase the area of the blast to 20m. *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Guided Missile:** Billed as fire and forget, these rockets have their own guidance system and have the ability to navigate around obstacles and even readjust after missing. Gain Reliable 3 on all attacks using the guided missile. A character with a datajack may replace the ranged attack Test with the missile with a Piloting Test. If they do so, on a Failure (but not a Dynamic Failure) they may attempt to abort their attack and make another attack on the next Round *(5 Fortune)*.
- **Buster Missile:** This heavy missile is designed for hitting fortified targets such as tanks or bunkers. Increase AP to 20, decrease range to 100m, and gain 1 instance of Dulled on attacks with Buster Missile. Illicit +1 *(5 Fortune)*.

ARMOR

SYNTHLEATHER CLOTHING

2 Fortune.

Originating as protective leather clothing for bikers and workers looking for a bit of protection on the job, almost all of the market has been replaced with synthetic facsimile marketed to those aspiring to a rough and tumble aesthetic. Nonetheless, the clothing still provides a modest bit of protection against minor scrapes and bruises.

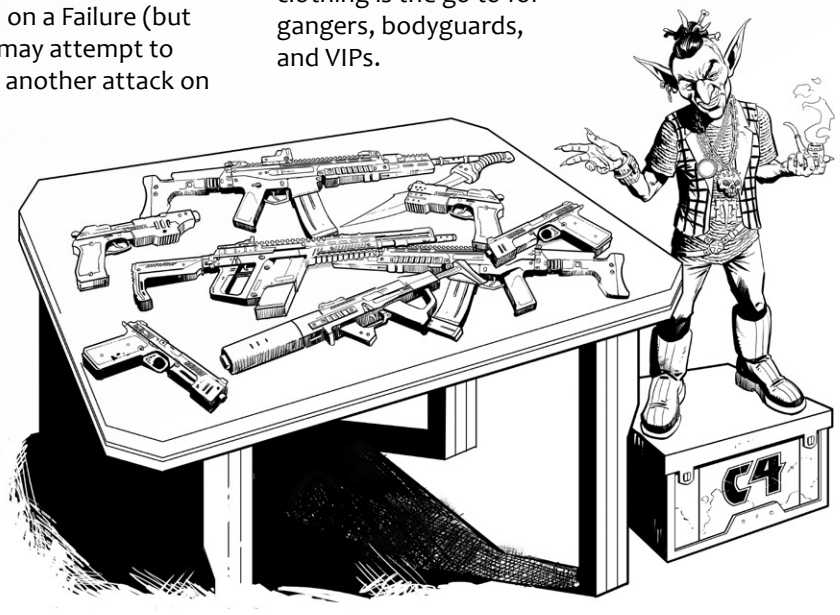
GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **High Fashion:** Your look is straight off the runway. You gain +1d6 on any Influence or Deception Test where fashion matters. *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Protection:** Your clothing is designed to protect against a particular hazard. Gain +2 Armor against fire, acid, or electricity (choose one) *(1 Fortune)*.
- **Pattern Shift:** Your clothing has the ability to change colors and patterns at will. You gain +1d6 on any attempts to disappear into a crowd. If combined with a camera array (such as Micro-Links (pg 106) or the Active Camouflage Cyberskin Enhancements (pg 161) you may instead gain +1d6 on all attempts to blend into your surroundings *(2 Fortune)*.

ARMORED CLOTHING

5 Fortune.

Designed to be comfortable enough for everyday wear and inconspicuous enough to not immediately call attention to it, armored clothing is the go to for gangers, bodyguards, and VIPs.



GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **High Fashion:** Your look is straight off the runway. You gain +1d6 on any Influence or Deception Test where fashion matters *(3 Fortune)*.
- **Protection:** Your clothing is designed to protect against a particular hazard. Gain +3 Armor against fire, acid, or electricity (choose one) *(1 Fortune)*.

BODY ARMOR

10 Fortune.

Developed for military conflicts, Body Armor is most commonly seen as the default garb for Lawjacks on patrol. Designed to make the wearer impervious to most minor attacks and help them to survive more dangerous ones, it is illegal for most civilians.

GEAR ENHANCEMENTS (PICK UP TO 1)

- **Standard Lawjack Issue:** This gear is straight out of a Lawjack Armory. Illegal for civilians to own, those available on the black market are valuable as much for their worth as a disguise as for protection. Gain +1d6 on all rolls to impersonate a lawjack. +2 Armor. Illicit +1 *(4 Fortune)*.
- **Protection:** Your clothing is designed to protect against a particular hazard. Gain +5 Armor against fire, acid, or electricity (choose one) *(2 Fortune)*.

Name	Bonus	Other Notes	Fortune Cost
Synthleather Clothing	2 Armor	-	2
Armored Clothing	5 Armor	Disguised	5
Body Armor	10 Armor	Conspicuous, -1 guard, Illicit 2	10

GEAR KEYWORDS

BLAST

This weapon does half damage to any target within 5m of its target.

CONSPICUOUS

This item is obvious and impossible to conceal on your person. In most situations, carrying this item will give penalties to Regard and Concealment Tests to fit in, and may make some Tests impossible (You can't fit in at a fancy ball carrying a rocket launcher, and the bodyguards of a VIP lounge are going to immediately react to someone carrying a rifle).

DISGUISED

This piece of gear appears on first glance to be a mundane item. Determining its true purpose requires a TN 13 Observation Test.

FRIGHTENING

This weapon causes additional Animity damage when used to threaten a foe or when first used in a fight (see "Frightening" on pg 23).

ILLICIT (X)

This item is illegal in Neo Babylon. You must have a Relation to purchase this whose Power is double the Illicit value of the item (rounded down) (see "Dealer" on pg 122).

MULTI-TARGET

On a Dynamic Success, this weapon gains +1d6 damage and makes an additional attack against a target in range whose guard it beats (this can be the same target). On a Critical Success, make a third attack against a valid target in range. These effects replace the normal effects for Dynamic and Critical Success.

NONLETHAL

This weapon never risks fatally injuring its target, and targets incapacitated by it do not need medical attention to recover.

SINGLE USE

This item may only be used once.

CURRENCY

In Neo Babylon, the **Silver Standard Shekel** is the local currency. It is often referred to as silver standards, standards, or most commonly, **stanz**. While most purchases are covered by your Caste's lifestyle, extra Stanz can be spent on expenses beyond your lifestyle, or for abnormal expenditures like bribes or hiring someone to do a significant task. Fortune represents stanz, but also the time, energy, and commitment PCs have put into managing their life. The exchange rate for stanz is 1 Fortune for 1,000 Stanz, and they may be exchanged back and forth at any C-link. In narrative terms, PCs can think of this as an abstraction for exchanging favors, purchasing or selling goods, or otherwise swapping bits of their Fortune around.

Vehicles

In Neo Babylon, there's no single most common type of vehicle. Bikes, cars, and vans vie for the streets, while helicopters and VTOLs carry the elites above them. Massive shipping vessels feed the Neo Babylon economy, while fishing boats and yachts dance around them. Hypersonic jets let corporate executives cross the planet in hours, while cargo planes ensure perishable goods are available anywhere.

BUYING AND LEASING VEHICLES

Very few people in Neo Babylon own vehicles outright—most people can't afford the sticker price, and those who can tend to prefer the flexibility of trading in for a new model as their needs change. Characters may lease one or more vehicles at a rate of 1 Fortune for each 10 Fortune the vehicles cost (round up), payable each Downtime. Depending on the character's caste, part of this cost may be covered by their caste lifestyle (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37).

If a character loses or destroys a vehicle they are leasing, they must continue to pay for the vehicle for the next three Downtimes, at which point the loss is written off and the debt is forgiven.

Caste	Free Monthly Lease Fortune	Example Free Vehicle
Undercity	-	
Lower	-	
Lower-Middle	1	Bike
Upper-Middle	2	Car
Upper	5	Any Ground
Elite	10	Aircraft

VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

All vehicles have four key Attributes:

- **Speed:** Representing how fast a vehicle is
- **Size:** Representing how big it is
- **Health:** Representing how much damage it can take
- **Capacity:** Representing how many people or cargo it can carry
- **Autonomy Index (AI):** Representing how capable the vehicle is without a pilot.

Additionally, vehicles may have a number of other traits representing their specific abilities—these are covered later and will be listed with the vehicle description.

SPEED

Speed indicates the top speed of a vehicle. While Speed is usually an abstract value, sometimes (particularly for long distance travel) it's useful to know the actual Speed.

SIZE

The size value of a vehicle represents how large it is, which restricts where it can go and helps determine how many people or how much cargo it can carry.

Size applies as a negative modifier to Guard for all attacks targeting a vehicle, as well as any stealth Tests made to avoid detection.

CAPACITY

Capacity represents how much the vehicle can carry. Each point of capacity corresponds to seating for one person or equivalent cargo space (~200kg), and is represent by two numbers, corresponding to the number of seats (s) and the amount of cargo space (c) (e.g. 5s/2c represents a sedan with space for 5 people and a trunk that can fit 2 people's worth of supplies).

In a pinch, people can fit in cargo space and vice versa: however each passenger space can only fit half as much cargo as designated cargo capacity and passengers in cargo space are uncomfortable and suffer increased consequences in cases of a crash.

HEALTH

The Health Attribute of a vehicle determines how much damage it can take and remain functional.

AUTONOMY INDEX (AI)

The Autonomy Index represents the ability of the vehicle to pilot on its own. When operating independently, vehicles are treated as having a number of dice equal to half their AI (round up), with a bonus equal to their AI. A vehicle's guard, Vigilance, Aegis, and Security Rating are equal to 5 + (AI times 2). (Remember, vehicles have a penalty to guard equal to their size). Vehicles have a firewall equal to their AI times 5.

OTHER TRAITS

The following traits are common on many vehicles, but not mandatory.

ACCELERATION X

Vehicles with an Acceleration value may increase their Speed by an amount equal to their Acceleration whenever they take the accelerate Backup Action.

ARMOR

Some vehicles have Armor—this functions like worn Armor for characters.

Speed Value	Top Speed in mph (kph)	Distance Moved per Move Action	Examples
0	15kph (10 mph)	0-10m	Average human running
1	25 kph (15 mph)	11-30m	Average human sprinting
2	30 kph (20 mph)	31-50m	Human athlete sprinting
3	50 kph (30 mph)	51-75m	Large ships, industrial equipment
4	70 kph (45 mph)	76-100m	Electric bikes, horse
5	110 kph (70 mph)	101-150m	Gryphons flying & running
6	160 kph (100 mph)	151-225m	Speed boats, most cars and motorcycles
7	245 kph (150 mph)	226-350m	Helicopters
8	365 kph (230 mph)	351-500m	Super cars
9	550 kph (340 mph)	501-750m	Tilt rotor VTOLS
10	825 kph (510 mph)	751-1250m	Commercial Jets
11	1240 kph (770 mph) (Mach 1)	1251-1500m	Vectored thrust VTOLs
+1	Increase top Speed by 50%	x1.5	-

PILOTING VEHICLES

Any modern vehicle (and some retrofitted non-modern ones) is controlled by complicated cybertech and covered with a suite of sensors and a basic computer capable of performing basic tasks autonomously. Furthermore, the vast majority of vehicles are designed to be piloted remotely by Jumpers. Like any other cybertech device, vehicles have a Range that determines how far away a user can be and issue them commands. Anyone with a Halo or other device capable of interacting wirelessly with cybertech within range can issue commands and observe the sensors of a vehicle as an Authorized Action. The vehicle will attempt to obey any commands to the best of its ability (see AI, above). Any character with a datajack may remotely operate a vehicle if they are within its range, using their own Piloting skill. Furthermore, a character with a datajack may make simultaneous observations out of any number of vehicles within range that they have access to, though they take a -1 penalty on Observation Tests for each vehicle observing a different area.

Most vehicles (except drones) also have manual controls, allowing the vehicle to be operated when its range is set to **T**. Manual controls remain popular among those concerned about rogue breachers, who prefer the personal touch (or simply are going on a long voyage that would bring the vehicle out of range of a stationary operator)

AUTONOMOUS OPERATION AND CINEMATICS

Vehicles in Subversion are capable of autonomous operation, though their abilities are considerably worse than those of people. In a cinematic, the abilities of autonomous drones and vehicles provide a bonus to their operator's roll equal to the number of drones or vehicles participating, with a maximum bonus equal to the lowest AI of an assisting drone (you may ignore the assistance of a drone for this purpose if desired). A player may choose to have an autonomous vehicle or drone act instead of them in initiative (e.g. if a drone has necessarily equipment and they do not, or a player is worse at Piloting than the vehicle). In this case they are assumed to be supervising and assisting the drone as per the rules for teamwork Tests.

Autonomous Vehicles off-screen

The rules for autonomous vehicles assume that the narrative focus will always be on the PC, not their vehicles or drones. Sometimes, however, an autonomous vehicle might do something important completely independently of the PC. For most cases, the GM is encouraged to handle this purely narratively, deciding what happens without spending time resolving it with rolls. Of course, if it serves the purposes of fun or narrative tension to play out a lone drone sent out to try and get help while the PCs are all unconscious, then do it!

VEHICLE CHASSIS

Vehicles in Subversion are divided into a number of broad categories, representing different sizes and modes of movement. Each vehicle category has a base set of Attributes that can be modified by choosing enhancements. Enhancements can be purchased at the time of acquiring the vehicle or drone, or added later (either by modding the vehicle directly or by trading in for a similar vehicle with different enhancements). Each chassis has a default number of enhancements, though these can be modified by abilities from the Engineer (pg 150) and Jumper (pg 156) paradigms.

UNIVERSAL ENHANCEMENTS

These modifications are available to all vehicles.

- **Autonomous Conversion:** Sacrificing passenger space for improved sensors and computing, the vehicle becomes better capable of operating independently and remotely, in exchange for losing a drivers seat. Gain -1p, but gain +2 AI and +2 on all Observation Tests made using this vehicle's sensors (2 Fortune).
- **Improved Cargo:** This ability does not count towards the number of options you may take for a drone or vehicle. Increase your cargo capacity by up to vehicle's size, but decrease your seating by an equal amount. You may not decrease your seating below zero. This option may be taken multiple times (1 Fortune).
- **Improved Seating:** This ability does not count towards the number of options you may take for a drone or vehicle. Increase your seating capacity by one, but decrease your cargo by an equal amount. You may not decrease your cargo below zero. This option may be taken multiple times (2 Fortune).
- **Smuggling Compartment:** This vehicle has secret compartments designed to hide goods or people from detection. Gain +1 cargo capacity, and any attempts to locate the cargo hidden in that compartment require a successful TN 15 Observation Test. This option may be taken multiple times (2 Fortune).
- **Weapon Mount:** A weapon is mounted to the drone or vehicle. This may be operated manually by someone using one of the seats of the vehicle, remotely by someone wirelessly connected to the weapon mount, or by the AI of the drone or vehicle. Gain Reliable 3 on all rolls with the weapon. The price of this mod does not include the weapon. This option may be taken multiple times (1 Fortune). When used with tasers, knives, stun batons, or pistols the mount can be concealed when not in use, requiring a TN 13 Observation Test to notice.

Ground Drone

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
3	0	1c	8	4	1	-

Ground drones cover a huge range of different forms, ranging from small wheeled delivery drones to armored security drones designed to automatically patrol for intruders.

Ground Drone Enhancements

The following options are available to ground drones. A drone may take a maximum of one enhancement.

- **Improved Payload:** Gain +1 Cargo Capacity (1 Fortune).
- **Armored Drone:** Gain +5 Armor (2 Fortune).
- **Efficient Chassis:** This ability does not count towards the number of options you may take for a drone. Increase the maximum number of enhancements on this drone by 1 (4 Fortune).
- **Bulky Drone:** This ability does not count towards the number of options you may take for a drone. Increase the size of the drone by 1, the Health of the drone by +4, and increase the maximum number of enhancements on this drone by 1 (4 Fortune).
- **Boosted Powertrain:** Gain + 1 Speed and +1 Acceleration (2 Fortune).
- **Adhesive Grips:** This drone can climb on most surfaces without needing to make a Test, and gains Reliable 3 on all Tests to navigate difficult terrain (2 Fortune).

Car

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
6	4	5s/2c	32	1	15	-

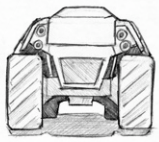
In the heart of Neo Babylon, cars are rare—roads are narrow alleys slicing between towering skyscrapers and massive zigguruts. The few cars that brave these narrow slivers of road compete with an overburdened mass of delivery trucks bringing in what's needed for the day's work and garbage trucks whisking away what was consumed yesterday. The upper castes shuttle in on air taxis, while everyone else shuffles in through elevated trains and

pedestrian walkways. A handful of taxi services exist for those with enough money and patience to brave the ground level traffic but for whom the price of an air-taxi is still out of reach.

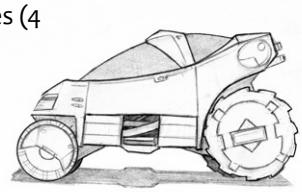
As you move towards the fringes of Neo Babylon, cars begin to emerge as the symbol of the upper-middle class, giving greater freedom to sample from a broader range of shops and amenities, with many semi-upscale neighborhoods intentionally cut off from mass transit.

Car Enhancements

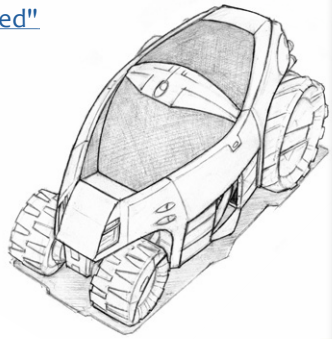
A car may pick up to 2 enhancements.



- **Armored:** This car is designed to protect its occupants from attack, and it can take a beating. Attacks on the vehicle or any of its occupants gain +5 Armor. This may be taken multiple times (4 Fortune).



- **Off-road:** This car is designed for navigating tough terrain. Decrease Speed by 1, but ignore the first dice of penalty for going above the safe Speed in terrain (see "Speed" on pg 55) (2 Fortune)



- **Performance:** This vehicle is designed for speed, with an oversized engine and aerodynamic shape. Gain Acceleration 2 and +1 Speed. (3 Fortune)

BIKES

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
6	2	1S/1C	16	1	7	Accelera-tion 2

If the car is the symbol of independence for the Upper-Middle Caste enclaves on the edge of the city, motorbikes are the symbol of independence for everyone who lives in the shadow of Neo Babylon's core. Able to weave around the commercial vans and trucks plodding through the ground level streets and duck through the narrow alleys, bikes are the tool of choice for those who want to deviate from the mass transit arteries that normally define distance for the masses commuting in and out of the city. Bike couriers compete with flying delivery drones for delivering small loads across the city, and independent medics dart through the city to provide emergency medical attention for those unable to afford a flying ambulance.

BIKE ENHANCEMENTS

A bike may have up to two enhancements.

- **Commuter:** Designed for city operations, these electric bikes take up less space, in exchange for a lower top speed. Decrease Size by 1 and Speed by 2 (0 Fortune).
- **Performance:** This vehicle is a marvel of engineering, with improved aerodynamics, engines, and electronics. Gain +1 Acceleration, Speed, and AI (5 Fortune).
- **Mobile Workshop:** This bike has a collection of tools built into it that allow it to serve as a base of operations for a profession (common examples include mini-ambulances, repair shops, field labs, and more). Gain Reliable 3 and Augment 2 on any task related to the Mobile Workshop (4 Fortune).
- **Combat Bike:** This bike is designed for combat, and comes with armor to protect it (and its rider) from incidental damage. The vehicle gains +4 Armor, and the rider gains +1 Armor (4 Fortune).
- **Off-road:** This bike is designed for navigating tough terrain. Decrease Speed by 1, but ignore the first die of penalty for going above the safe Speed in terrain (see "Speed" on pg 55) (2 Fortune).

TRUCKS

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
5	6	2S/10C	50	1	20	-

Neo Babylon is the industrial capital of the world. Underlying that perch is a network of thousands of factories, refineries, and warehouses, taking material from the bustling Neo Babylon ports and, in bits and pieces, turning them into the technological wonders that are the envy of the world. Almost all of these parts, however, spend time in the vans and trucks that navigate through Neo Babylons streets, making them an ever-present sight, especially in the industrial quarters of Neo Babylon.

TRUCK ENHANCEMENTS

A truck may choose up to 3 enhancements.

- **Armored:** This truck is designed to protect its occupants from attack, and it can take a beating. Attacks on the vehicle or any of its occupants gain +8 Armor. This may be taken multiple times (4 Fortune).
- **Off-road:** This truck is designed for navigating tough terrain. Decrease Speed by 1, but ignore the first die of penalty for going above the safe Speed in terrain (see "Speed" on pg 55) (2 Fortune).
- **Performance:** This vehicle is designed for speed, with an oversized engine and aerodynamic shape. Gain Acceleration 2 and +1 Speed (5 Fortune).
- **Modular Industrial Truck (MIT):** This class of large trucks are designed to operate with a wide range of interchangeable rear modules, enabling a single vehicle to switch purposes with a minimal amount of retooling. Increase the size of the vehicle by 1 and choose one of the following back ends. Rear modules can be exchanged with 10 minutes of effort (2 Fortune + module cost).
  - **Cargo Container:** Gain +20 Cargo Capacity. Individual Cargo Containers may be specialized for certain types of cargo (such as a dump trailer for transporting gravel, a tanker for transporting liquid, or a trailer for transporting smaller vehicles) (4 Fortune).
  - **Universal Skyhook:** This module includes a small crane able to reach up to 15 m from the vehicle, able to be fit with a winch, small basket for up to 2 people, or bucket for moving earth or other loose material. Deploying the crane further than 5m from the vehicle requires deploying the integrated stabilizers and immobilizing the vehicle. The Universal Skyhook gives Augment 5 on all tasks involved in construction or moving large objects (10 Fortune).
  - **Commercial Module:** The specific forms of commercial modules are almost endless—food trucks, mobile repair shops, medical clinics, analysis labs and more. Gain +5 seating and Cargo Capacity and gain Augment 5 to a specific task related to the function of the commercial Module (8 Fortune).
  - **Mobile Habitat:** This module includes all the necessities for an (admittedly cramped) home for up to 4 people, including a cooking space, bathroom with shower, beds, and small table. Gain +4 seats and +2 cargo capacity. Reduce the cost of maintaining lifestyle by 1 (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37) (8 Fortune).
  - **Passenger Mover:** This module is designed to carry large amounts of people. Gain +15 Seats (6 Fortune).
  - **Exchange Program:** You've bought into a group that allows you to easily swap out your rear module at a wide range of locations. You may exchange your rear module at any time for any other module, as long as you are in a modestly sized settlement (20 Fortune).

Aquatic Drone

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
3	0	1c	10	4	1	-

Aquatic drones are commonly used to patrol harbors, though they also find use by fishing crews, shipping companies, and scientists.

Aquatic Drone Enhancements

The following options are available to aquatic enhancement. A drone may take a maximum of one enhancement.

- **Improved Payload:** Gain +1 Cargo Capacity (1 Fortune).
- **Armored Drone:** Gain +5 Armor (2 Fortune).
- **Efficient Chassis:** This ability does not count towards the maximum number of enhancements. Increase the maximum number of enhancements by 1 (4 Fortune).
- **Bulky Drone:** This ability does not count towards the maximum number of enhancements. Increase the size of the drone by 1, the Health of the drone by +4, and increase the maximum number of enhancements by 1 (4 Fortune).
- **Boosted Powertrain:** Gain + 1 Speed and +1 Acceleration (2 Fortune).
- **Submersible:** This drone can travel underwater to a depth of 300m. -1 Speed (4 Fortune).

Boat

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
4	8	4s/20c	60	1	20	-

In addition to the vast super-haulers that carry goods across the ocean, Neo Babylon relies on an armada of smaller boats to provide transit across the bay, maintain the great seawall, and ensure the great fish market is never empty. For many of the outlying coastal communities in the greater Neo Babylon orbit, boats are more practical and useful than ground transport.

Boat Enhancements

A boat may take up to three enhancements

- **Armored:** This vehicle is designed to protect its occupants from attack, and it can take a beating. Attacks on the vehicle or any of its occupants gain +8 Armor. This may be taken multiple times (4 Fortune).
- **Speed Boat:** This vehicle is designed for speed, trading speed for cargo. Gain +1 Speed, and -5 c (5 Fortune).
- **Submersible:** This drone can travel underwater to a depth of 300m. -1 Speed (10 Fortune).
- **Modular Industrial Boat (MIB):** Sharing a system with MITs, MIBs provide both an easy method for customizing boats as well as a common method for handling multistage trips with cargo transitioning from maritime travel to land deliveries. See Modular Industrial Truck (see pg 117) for options (2 Fortune).
- **Large Boat:** While most boats used by individuals in Neo Babylon are less than 10m long, a handful possess larger boats, either adapted from major commercial purposes or custom made by bespoke shipyards for the needs of elites with money. Double the size, capacity, and Health of the boat. If this boat also has a MIB system, it may load two modules at once. Decrease the Speed of the boat by one, and triple the cost of the speedboat and submersible options. Increase the number of options you can take for this boat by 4 (15 Fortune).

Aerial Drone

Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
6	0	-	6	4	3	Acceler-ation 2

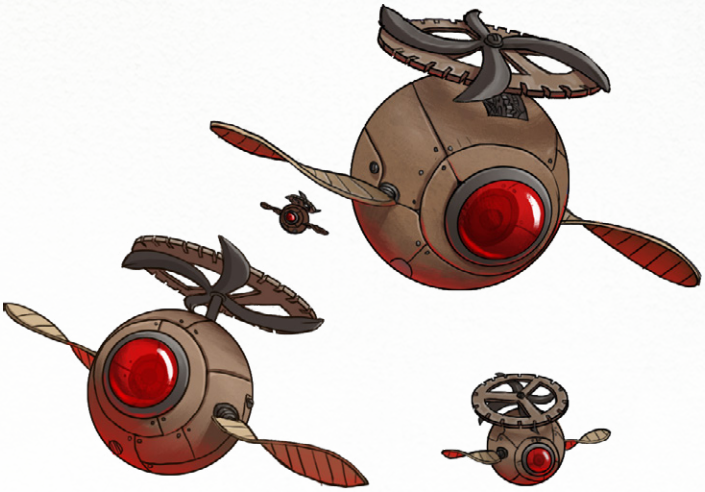
Aerial drones are omnipresent in Neo Babylon as delivery drones and mobile billboards.

Aerial Drone Enhancements

A drone may take a maximum of one enhancement.

- **Improved Payload:** Gain +1 Cargo Capacity (1 Fortune).
- **Armored Drone:** Gain +3 Armor (2 Fortune).
- **Efficient Chassis:** This ability does not count towards the maximum number of enhancements. Increase the maximum number of enhancements by 1 (4 Fortune).

- **Bulky Drone:** This ability does not count towards the maximum number of enhancements. Increase the size of the drone by 1, the Health of the drone by +4, and increase the maximum number of enhancements by 1 (4 Fortune).
- **Boosted Powertrain:** Gain + 1 Speed and +1 Acceleration (2 Fortune).
- **Quiet Operation:** Gain +1d6 on all Tests to remain undetected with this drone (2 Fortune)
- **Improved Sensors:** Gain +1d6 on all Observation Tests with this drone (2 Fortune).



AIRCRAFT

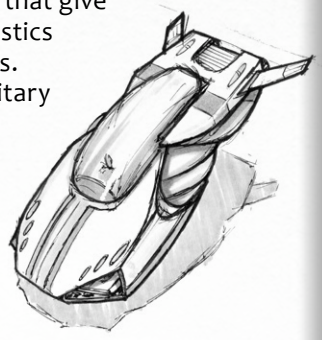
Speed	Size	Capacity	Health	AI	Fortune Cost	Default Traits
7	8	4s/4c	40	4	60	Acceler-ation 2

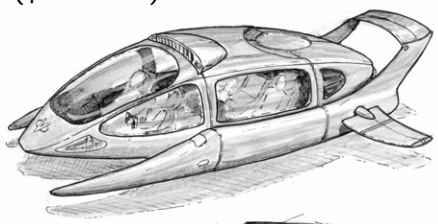
Flight has always been a symbol of prestige and power in Neo Babylon. From its founding force mages and their artifices flitted with gryphons through the air, a visible symbol of their power and superiority. Now, gryphons and magical flight have largely been relegated to hobbies, but an endless stream of personal helicopters, multicopter air-taxis, VTOLs, and more stream across the sky. Flight is the fastest way to cross the upper echelons of Neo Babylon, and it furthermore allows the elite of Neo Babylon to remain continuously elevated from the lower castes.

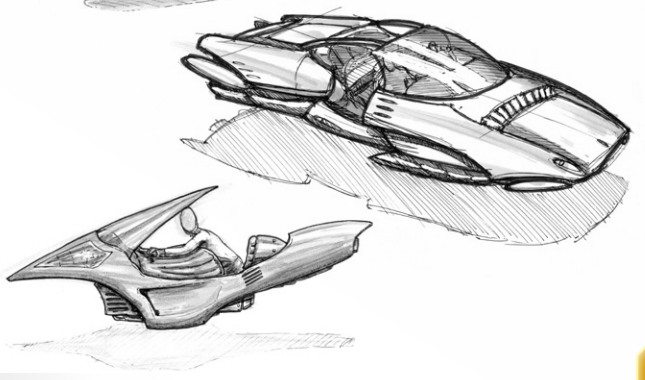
AIRCRAFT ENHANCEMENTS

An aircraft may take up to three enhancements

- **Armored:** This vehicle is designed to protect its occupants from attack, and it can take a beating. Attacks on the vehicle or any of its occupants gain +4 Armor. This may be taken multiple times (4 Fortune).
- **Quiet Operation:** Usually marketed as quality of life and to meet restrictive city ordinances, these craft are also the favorites of smugglers and others who try and move around unnoticed. Gain +2d6 on all Piloting Tests to avoid notice with this vehicle (5 Fortune).
- **Tilt Rotor:** While the most common aircraft in Neo Babylon use horizontal rotors to generate lift, some craft are designed to allow those rotors to tilt forward to provide thrust, transitioning to using wings to provide lift. While the wings increase the size of the craft, the result is a vehicle with a higher top speed better suited for long distance travel. Increase Speed and Size by 1. This option is incompatible with Vectored Thrust Jet (10 Fortune)
- **Vectored Thrust Jet:** Most VTOLs rely on propellers for lift for good reason—jet engines are inefficient at low speeds, requiring massive engines just to keep aloft. There's an upside to this approach though—once you have engines with enough thrust to keep you aloft, you also have engines that give you performance characteristics on par with many jet fighters. Originally developed for military craft, commercial vectored thrust jets combine the maneuverability of a helicopter, the speed of a jet, and the price tag of a small private island. Gain +4 Speed, +3 Acceleration, and +1 Size (40 Fortune).







Relations

Envoys need all the help they can get if they are going to make a difference, and the biggest supports they have are the people and groups they've invested in. These people are called **Relations**.

A PC's **Relations** cover everyone from their family to their mechanic—anyone who might be able to provide some help to you if you need it. When making a Relation, the PC chooses the Power, Primary Skill, Archetype, and Aspect of the Relation, which gives the cost of gaining them (as detailed below). Then, the PC gives the Relation a name and notes the Community or Faction they are a part of (when appropriate). In addition to individual Relations, each Community will have **Community Relations** (see "4. Community Resources, Factions, And Relations" on pg 79) embedded in the Community itself, which are available to all PCs.

Power

Power measures a Relation's ability to help (or hinder) you, either indirectly or directly. Whenever a Relation is required to make a Test related to their primary skill or archetype, roll a number of dice equal to their Power with a bonus equal to half their Power (round up). Power 1 characters roll 3 dice with Dulled 4, while Power 2 characters roll 3 dice with Dulled 5. If the roll is only somewhat related to their profession, divide their Power by two, and if they are asked for their help in a way completely unrelated to their skill, treat them as Power 1. Power can be improved as a longterm project (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36).

Relation Attributes

By default, Relations have defenses (most relevantly Vigilance) equal to 9+ their Power, and Health and Animity tracks equal to Power x 2 +10, though the GM is encouraged to tweak this to suit individual Relations if it becomes relevant.

Power	Examples
1	A child or other character that is mostly dependent on others.
2	A teenager or unskilled laborer. A gang of street urchins.
3	A typical competent adult. A small group of unskilled teens or adults. An undercity community with no power of its own. A typical family or small social group.
4	An expert tradesman, city councilperson, or leader of a prominent organization. A small, lower caste neighborhood or gang.
5	An influential business or businessperson. Local Gang boss or crime boss. A medium sized neighborhood, or prominent school, temple, or other prominent organization with more than 100 members.
6	A notable subject matter expert or influential power-broker. A medium/large neighborhood or influential business.
7	A powerful mayor. A small city, major university, or other institution with more than 10,000 members.
8	A governor, prominent celebrity, or expert. A powerful lobbyist group, powerful elite family, or less influential district in Neo Babylon.
9	A world expert or universally known celebrity. A large city or major district in Neo Babylon. The head of the Bravia crime family.
10	A head of state, member of the Ukkim Council, CEO, or majority owner of a major corporation. A state or province in a major country or top-tier corporation.
11	A small nation. A national political party, multinational conglomerate, or branch of a major government.
12	Neo Babylon and other major powers.

Regard

The Regard of a Relation toward the PC or PCs is how disposed the Relation is to help them (see "Regard" on pg 42). **Base Regard** is the default attitude unless things change somehow. Sometimes, Regard will grow higher than its base; this temporary value is referred to as **Current Regard**. In these cases, the Relation's Regard decreases to its Base Regard at the end of each Downtime. A PC can maintain or improve the Regard of a Relation across Downtimes by taking the Interact with Relation Downtime Action (see "Interact With Relation" on pg 37).

Favors

If you have an Ask for a Relation, you may be able to get them to help out in exchange for a **Favor.** At some later point, a Relation may cash in that favor—if you refuse, decrease the contact's Base Regard by one. Similarly, if you do something for a Relation, you might get a Favor. A Favor can be used to decrease a future Ask by five, or to increase Current Regard by three.

BUILDING RELATIONS

Each Relation has a two key components, their **Primary Skill** and their Relation **Archetype**. Additionally, Relations may have one or more Aspects that affect how they interact with the PCs.

PRIMARY SKILL

A **Primary skill** is the Relation's main skill and the most likely skill you'll call on them to use to help you.

RELATION ARCHETYPE

A Relation's **Archetype** (see below) gives particular bonuses when a PC makes certain types of Asks.

RELATION ASPECTS

Relation Aspects are optional qualities for Relations that affect the terms, effectiveness, availability, and ultimately the cost, of relations. Aspects may be chosen during their creation.

Relations may agree to asks that are not related to their Archetype or Primary Skill, but they do not gain the associated bonus and are treated as having a reduced Power (see Power, above).

FACTIONS

Factions are groups of characters that work together towards a common goal. Factions are treated as normal relations, though they may always be used as Connection Archetypes (see the Connection Archetype for details), and some Archetypes and Aspects may only be chosen for Factions.

COMMUNITIES

In each Subversion Story, the PCs' Community—the primary society in which the PCs live, breathe, and hopefully derive a sense of belonging and identity—sometimes functions as a Relation. Communities act like a Faction for all intents and purposes, including having a Power and Archetype. And importantly, PCs have a Base Regard with their Community.

Communities are developed at the beginning of a Subversion Story communally using the rules in Creating a Community (pg 76). Each player starts with a Base Regard of 5 to their Community for free.

RELATION ARCHETYPES

Each Relation archetype provides special rules related to that archetype as well as sample Asks (see pg 44) that a character might use with that Relation.

CARE

This Relation provides medical or mental care for you. As long as you have a positive Regard with this character or Faction, they will take the provide care action on your behalf in Downtime whenever you take the recover action. For every five points of Regard you have with them, gain one Grit whenever they help you.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Basic medical advice, provide a referral.
- **5:** Provide immediate medical attention.
- **10:** Provide long term care to someone else for you.
- **15:** Go with you someplace dangerous in case you get hurt.

CLOUT (FACTION ONLY)

This Faction has official or unofficial responsibility over a domain of daily life, such as law enforcement, local crime, Community relations, or government. Reduce the Ask by 2 for any Asks related to the functioning of this Faction and their domain.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide advice related to their domain.
- **5:** Cut through red tape (automatic Success on an Influence Test to get something done).
- **10:** Make an exception relevant to their domain (reduce relevant progress track by 5).
- **15:** Use the power of their domain directly for you.

CONNECTION

This Relation can put you in contact with other people you might want to know. As a rating zero **Ask**, they will put you in contact with a one-use Relation with a Power less than their Power and a Current Regard of zero. For every 3 points you increase the Ask, you can increase the Current Regard of the contact by 3 or their Power by one.

Special: All Factions count as connection Relations (in addition to any other archetype they might pick). Using the connection ability of a Faction requires a Downtime Action, and they may only connect characters to a member of that Faction (which may limit the type of characters accessible). If a Faction picks connection as its archetype, this restriction does not apply, and any Relations made with this ability instead get +2 Regard and +1 Power.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide basic information and contact info about people.
- **5:** Make introductions and vouch for you.
- **10:** Make introductions in person and help convince the new Relation to help you.
- **15:** Cash in all their chips to get a VIP to agree to meet and help you out.

DEALER

There is a seedy side to many communities. Dealers can get you things that other, more legitimate, businesses can't.

Pick one broad category of illegal goods (drugs, weapons, stolen information, etc.). You may use your dealer contact to purchase anything from that category of an Illicit value equal to half their Power or less (round down).

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide advice or gossip related to illicit goods.
- **5:** Sell you an illicit good.
- **10:** Use their connections to track down something outside their usual fare (either of a higher illicit value or a different category of goods).
- **15:** Convince them to help set up a sting on one of their clients.

EMPLOYER

This Relation is always looking for work, and willing to provide it on generous terms. Whenever you take the Side Gig Downtime Action with them, gain a bonus on the roll equal to their Power divided by 2 (round up). For every five points of Regard you have with them, decrease the GM Grit by one when you take the Side Gig action.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide information about their work and opportunities they know about.
- **5:** Give you first dibs on an opportunity for work.
- **10:** Let you borrow something from their jobs or take advantage of their business at a discount.
- **15:** Convince them to forge an alibi for you to get you out of a major crime.

INFORMATION

This Relation knows stuff about a specific domain. Pick a subset of their primary skill as a specialty (e.g. a biology professor would have a domain of Science and a specialty in biology). They gain Reliable 3 on any Test to know something related to their primary skill, and gain a +3 on any Test related to their specialty.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide off the cuff advice.
- **5:** Spend an afternoon researching something for you.
- **10:** Do a long term research project for you.
- **15:** Go on a dangerous trip with you to provide hands on analysis.

MELTING POT (FACTION ONLY)

While united by a common connection, each individual member of this group has a unique mix of skills. The Faction does not have a primary skill. Instead, they are treated as if they had all skills available, but roll two fewer dice than normal when making a Test.

SAMPLE ASKS

Anything!

SERVICE

This Relation has a useful skill, trade, or job that can help out the PC. Whenever an Ask involves them using their primary skill to perform an action for a character, that Test gains +1 dice and Augment 1.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide advice or a quote related to a job.
- **5:** Do a couple hours of free work for you.
- **10:** Take a Downtime Action on your behalf. doing something or providing support for a job from a safe distance.
- **15:** Join you going someplace dangerous and using their skills for you.

SWAG

This Relation has easy access to a broad category of legal gear (e.g. Electronics and Software, Tools Science and Medicine, Combat Gear). They can always provide you with gear for purchase from that category. If you spend 1 Downtime Action, you may purchase gear through them at a discount of 1 Fortune per item (minimum cost of 1 per item). Furthermore, you may spend a Downtime Action to borrow a piece of gear from them—the maximum value you can borrow is equal to the value of the Ask times their Power. If you fail to return it by the end of the next Downtime, or if it's broken, you gain a debt to them equal to the value of the gear.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Ask for advice about gear they sell.
- **5:** Borrow something worth five times their Power.
- **10:** Borrow something even though you haven't paid them back for the last thing you lost.
- **15:** "Borrow" something valuable even though they know you aren't going to bring it back.

TEACHER

This Relation provides specific training for those willing to spend time learning. You may take a Downtime Action to gain one of the following benefits:

- Choose a paradigm when this Relation is made. When you use this ability, you may select a paradigm ability whose prerequisites you meet and spend 1 Fortune per 10 Fortune the paradigm ability costs, if you do, you gain the paradigm ability until the start of the next Downtime. For each 5 Regard you have with the Relation, decrease the Fortune cost of this ability by 1.
- Reduce the cost to buy a rank in their primary skill by half your Regard (round up) with them if the new rank in the skill is lower than their Power.
- Gain Inspired with their primary skill until the start of the next Downtime.

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide advice.
- **5:** Look after someone for a couple of hours.
- **10:** Take someone as a student on your recommendation.
- **15:** Use their skills to intervene for you.

TRANSPORT

This Relation is an expert at moving people and goods around without issues. They can automatically elude normal security, law enforcement, piracy, etc. from any organization equal to or lower than their Power, and gain Reliable 4 on all rolls to evade notice or deflect suspicion about transported peoples or good.

A Transport Relation has a specific area of specialty (either by goods type, method of transportation, or location)—treat their Power as two points higher when using that specialty. The range of a Transport Relation depends on their Power, see below

SAMPLE ASKS

- **0:** Provide directions or advice.
- **5:** Give you a short ride somewhere or make a short delivery.
- **10:** Take a long trip with you or smuggle something extra for you.
- **15:** Take you somewhere that's likely to be dangerous or drastically increase their odds of being caught.

Power	Examples
1	Moving things within a single community
2	Moving things within a city
3	Moving things within a country
4	Moving things regionally
5+	Moving things globally

RELATION ASPECTS

ADVERSARIAL

An adversarial Relation actively works against you, even if they'll occasionally help you out. Whenever you seek out an adversarial Relation for help, you gain Grit equal to the lower of their Power and negative Regard (e.g. a Power 3 Regard -5 adversarial Relation would give the character 3 Grit). The GM gains an equal amount of Grit (if multiple characters have the same adversarial Relation, each character gains Grit, and the GM gains Grit for each character). Increasing the Base Regard of an adversarial Relation requires an additional cost equal to their Power (doubled for Factions).

Adversarial Relations are usually developed as part of Community creation (see "Neutral Factions and adversaries" on pg 79), though a player may elect to create a personal adversarial Relation if they choose. Calculate the cost of the Relation as normal, decreasing their cost by 2 points for each decrease in Regard (4 for Factions), to a minimum of zero Fortune.

PATERNALISTIC

Your Relation cares a lot about *you*, but they don't care a lot about what *you want to do*. If they think they need to intervene to protect you or help you, they will, but they're unlikely to help with more mundane requests. Treat their Regard as 5 higher when they decide to help you out, but 5 lower when asking for help they weren't already predisposed to offer.

UNRELIABLE

Your Relation might be good, but they're hard to get a hold of. Whenever you try and reach them, roll 1d6. On a 4-6, gain a favor with them, on a 3 lose a favor (or they gain a favor on you). On a 1-2, they are unavailable until the start of the next Downtime. You may spend 1 Grit to re-roll this dice.

UNSHAKABLE

Maybe it's family, maybe it's a debt, or maybe it's just a really long history. Regardless of the reason, their Regard towards you will not go below their Base Regard. Furthermore, at the end of every Downtime, if you owe them more than one favor, decrease the number of favors you owe by one, and if they owe you more than one favor, do likewise. Unshakable Relations cost twice as much Fortune.

TOXIC

Being around this person is bad for you. You take 3 Irresistible Animity damage any session (Downtime or act) that you substantially interact with them. Toxic contacts cost 5 less Fortune (after any other modifiers, to a minimum of 1).

SUPPORTIVE

This person is a grounding influence on you. You increase your max Grit by one. Additionally, the first time you interact with them in a session you gain one Grit (up to your max). Supportive contacts cost 15 Fortune more (after any other multipliers). Only contacts with a Regard of 6 or higher may be supportive contacts.

TRANSACTIONAL

This contact is unwilling to show any favors or allow them to be in debt to you. They will never accept or give favors. If they do agree to help you for future rewards, instead gain a Debt to them (see pg 94). On the flip side, their transactional nature makes it easier to grease the wheels with them—when using Sweeten the Deal to reduce an Ask, you gain twice the normal benefit per Fortune spent (-6 instead of -3).

MULTI-TALENTED

This Relation is good for multiple things. Pick any number of additional Relation archetypes or primary skills: multiply the cost of the contact by 1 plus half the number of Relation archetypes or primary skills added (i.e. one additional archetype increases their cost by x1.5, two increases it by x2, three increases by x2.5, etc.).

DUES

Faction only.

You can make a regular "contribution" to this Faction in order to stay in their good graces. This could be protection money, tribute, or membership dues. Each Downtime, pay Fortune equal to 1/3 of the Faction's Power (round up), or decrease your Base Regard with this Faction by 1. If this would reduce your Base Regard below zero, you lose the Faction as a Relation. Factions with dues cost half as much.

Sample Relation: The Neon Witch

In the vibrant and eclectic Arcane Alley, where both powerful mages and gutterwitches go to procure cheap, rare, or illicit magical goods and services in the Undercity, there resides a captivating woman known as Neon Witch. Nynaeve Inannayan, the proprietor of Nynaeve's Curios and Concoctions, a whimsical magic shop adorned with neon lights and eclectic decorations, is more than just a merchant of enchanted items; she's reads fortunes, slings spells, and a seeks out the deeper mysteries that weave through the tapestry of reality. All from the comfort of her shop.

Nynaeve is always on the lookout for rare magical ingredients, leading her to offer quests for supplies that can lead to unexpected connections and adventures. Envoys from all over may find themselves involved in various tasks, or become targets, when Nynaeve's shop draws the attention of rivals or adversaries.

She's never open about her mysterious past, but she's wanted in the overcity, possibly for her gambling debts, but there are other far more dangerous aspects of her time before the Undercity.

Envoys take note: visiting Nynaeve for a fortune reading can result in unexpected twists of fate, being enlisted to aid someone in dire circumstances predicted by her accurate rituals, or perhaps becoming the target of ill fate themselves. She takes no responsibility for the outcome of her fortune readings, and warns would-be clients that whether or not they like the result, her results are always accurate.

Paradigms

Paradigms represent abilities gained by specific experiences, training, or lifestyles, and go beyond simple uses of skills.

Within each paradigm, th a number of **paradigm abilities**, which are special abilities gained by an investment of Fortune, either through stanz, time, luck, or favors.

They cover things you can do with skills, as well as ways of enhancing, expanding, or specializing those skills. They consist of magical abilities and cybernetic enhancements, but also represent extraordinary training as well as unique gear or experiences that assist the PC. All paradigms have the same basic structure and design, but requirements may vary. **We recommend starting characters spend 60 Fortune on paradigms (in addition to the 30 free Fortune they gain for the Personal Relations Paradigm and 10 free Fortune they have to spend on background paradigms).**

Investing in a paradigm may require the PC to meet certain prerequisites first, as listed in the paradigm's description.

List of Paradigms

Background Paradigm

The Background Paradigms (pg 128) cover the abilities that a character learned as part of their cultural heritage and upbringing.

Relation Paradigms

The Community Paradigm (pg 134) represents the resources and people available to the character's Community, as well as the efforts to improve it.

Relations (pg 132) represent the people characters know that are important in their life and/or can help them out.

Trained Paradigms

The Brawler (pg 138) is an expert in melee combat and taking damage and keeping on ticking.

The Face (pg 139) is an expert at manipulating social situations.

The Artist (pg 141) specializes in creation, inspiring people, and moving them to action.

The Delver (pg 142) is an expert in exploring the sparsely populated parts of the world and uncovering ancient ruins and magical artifacts.

The Magic Hunter (pg 143) is a expert on magical practitioners and beings, and how to stop them.

The Researcher (pg 145) is a master of a field of knowledge and an expert in uncovering information from libraries and applying that knowledge to the world.

The Mastermind (pg 146) is an expert planner and manipulator.

The Rouser (pg 147) is a leader and head instigator of a movement.

The Militaire (pg 148) brings military training and expertise to a problem (or a fight).

The Medico (pg 149) is an expert at medicine and healing.

The Engineer (pg 150) builds, repairs, and tinkers with things.

The Watchdog (pg 151) is an investigator specializing in uncovering secrets and solving crimes.

The Scoundrel (pg 152) is an expert in thievery, sneaking, and the underworld.

CYBER PARADIGMS

The Breacher (pg 154) is an expert at circumventing security on cybertech and manipulating computers and other high-tech devices.

The Jumper (pg 156) is an expert at remotely operating drones and vehicles.

Cyberware (pg 157) covers the usage of cybertech to enhance the body of individuals.

ARCANE MAGIC

Arcane casters can take abilities from paradigms corresponding to each of the six major colleges of arcane magic, each teaching how to manipulate a specific category of energy.

The College of Mana (pg 163)

The College of Force (Kinetic Energy) (pg 165)

The College of Light (pg 166)

The Alchemical College (Chemical) (pg 168)

The College of Storm (Electricity) (pg 171)

The College of Fire (Thermal) (pg 173)

SACRED MAGIC

Each chosen begins with the paradigm corresponding to one mantle embodying an ideal of their chosen power, though they may choose additional mantles as their connection to their power grows.

The Mantle of Authority (pg 175) empowers leaders and compels followers.

The Mantle of Cultivation (pg 176) strengthens and heals those around the chosen and their community.

The Mantle of Death (pg 178) enables the chosen to aid allies in combat and bring (and sometimes forestall) death.

The Mantle of Passion (pg 179) strengthens (and occasionally manipulates) the values, close relations, and impulses of the chosen and those around them.

The Mantle of Justice (pg 180) empowers the chosen to divine, punish, and redeem the guilty, and empower their victims.

The Mantle of Knowledge (pg 182) enables the chosen to learn about their world and the beings around them and exploit that knowledge to their ends.

The Mantle of Nature (pg 183) enables the chosen to survive and manipulate the powers of nature.

The Mantle of Secrets (pg 185) enables the chosen to find secrets and guard those secrets (and themselves) from attention.

SUBLIME MAGIC

Each Sublime Magic paradigm corresponds to a particular Yojin monastery, devoted to aspecting the practitioner to that element.

Yojin following the Way of Earth (pg 187) are tough and resistant to forces attempting to wear them down.

Yojin following the Way of Water (pg 188) are flexible and adapt to the world around them.

Yojin following the Way of Fire (pg 190) are impulsive, dangerous, and unparalleled fighters.

Yojin following the Way of Air (pg 191) are quick and mobile, soaring through the air with supernatural speed.

Yojin following the Way of the Void (pg 192) are masters of their inner selves as well as controlling the space around them.

Background Paradigms

Background paradigms represent the parts of a character that correspond to their upbringing, culture, and identity. Many of the paradigm abilities require belonging to a certain origin. Every character has 10 Fortune that they may spend for free on a background paradigm. Additionally, characters may take one Drawback ability, which gives them an additional 10 Fortune to spend on background paradigms. Characters may also spend additional Fortune on Background Paradigm abilities.

Each character may choose one of the following origins. A character may only count as one origin for the purposes of qualifying for background paradigm abilities.

- Altaipheran
- Babylonian (choose below)
- Chaldani
- Churuqian
- De Broceliande
- Ghassulian

The world of Subversion is a big place, and many other regions are possible. Players may choose origins from locales other than the most common origins in Neo Babylon, and either select background paradigm abilities that don't have an origin requirement, or, with GM permission, take a background ability from another origin.

Background Paradigm Abilities

Hunter

10 Fortune. Requires Altaipheran Origin.

If you were fortunate, you gained expertise with firearms learning to hunt in the forests near your home—if you were unfortunate you learned this skill in the War of Scars. You gain Reliable 2 on all Ranged Combat Tests as well as physicality Tests to remain stealthy in outdoor environments.

Pastoral Upbringing

10 Fortune. Requires Altaipheran Origin.

You grew up in the great rural pastures and farms of the UYC or Altaiphera, and have a deep familiarity with livestock and other animals. Gain Reliable 3 on all Piloting Tests involving riding animals, as well as Science Tests about animal husbandry.

Adaptable Bearing

10 Fortune. Requires Babylonian Origin.

The only constant in Neo Babylon is change. You've learned to deal with the constant changes in dominant corporations, Ukkim power games, and waxing and waning social movements. Once per session, you may gain +1d6 on any Test.

The Business of Business

10 Fortune. Requires Babylonian Origin and Lower Middle Caste or above.

You grew up in the greatest center of commerce in the world, and learned to barter and negotiate as you learned to walk. Gain Reliable 2 on all Influence and Deception Tests. Transactional Relations (see pg 125) cost 1 less Fortune for you (minimum 1).

School of Hard Knocks

10 Fortune. Requires Babylonian Origin and Lower or Undercity Caste.

You're used to getting in fights. You gain +1 Guard and Reliable 2 on all Melee Combat Tests.

The Family

10 Fortune. Requires Chaldani Origin.

The extended (and not always literal) family structures of the Chaldani has fueled one of the most successful organized crime factions in the world, the Bravia. While most people of Chaldani heritage have little dealings with the Bravia, significantly more know someone in their family who does, and those connections let someone cash in when they need some help. When you are paying interest on a Debt Step 8. Choose Debt (pg 94), you may instead choose to owe a favor to a suitable Relation affiliated with the Bravia. You do not need to pay interest on that debt while you owe a favor, however you will be expected to repay the favor in the future (the expected repayment matches the size of the debt). If you fulfill the favor, the debt is removed—but if you fail, expect trouble as the Bravia makes an example of you. Only one such favor can be owed at a time.

Quick Kin

10 Fortune. Requires Chaldani Origin.

You were immersed in the Chaldani tradition of great extended families (both by blood and by

choice—the distinction is weak in Acape Anya). The ever expanding social circle left you always ready to treat someone like family, an impression that makes it easier to fit it. Gain Reliable 2 on all Influence Tests, and gain 2 Grit whenever you buy a new Relation.

THE SEA CALLS

10 Fortune. Requires Chaldani Origin.

For many Chaldani, the ocean is more than just a geographical feature—it's a part of their culture and identity. Gain Reliable 3 on all physicality Tests to swim and Piloting Tests on the water.

PROLIFIC PEN PAL

10 Fortune. Requires Churuqian Origin.

Correspondence is a crucial part of Churuqian culture, with many Churuqs maintaining networks of acquaintances across the world with whom they share their expertise and cultural experiences. Once per session, you can use this ability to gain +3 on any Test to know something.

SCHOLARLY FOCUS

10 Fortune. Requires Churuqian Origin.

Churuq culture places little focus on physical prowess, instead encouraging reading and learning. Gain Reliable 2 on two of Science, Humanities, or Tech Tests (choose which skills when selecting this ability).

FOREST DWELLER

10 Fortune. Requires De Broceliande Origin.

More than just spending hours upon hours in the forests, you've developed a reverence for nature that inspires you. When in a forest, all of your rolls are Inspired. When you spend Grit to block or heal Animity damage in a forest, you heal 1 additional Animity.

INHERITANCE OF FAE ARCANA

10 Fortune. Requires De Broceliande Origin.

Tales of fae magic are common among the people of Val Broceliande, though if there is more to it than myth and a handful of hedge magicians bilking tourists, the secrets are well hidden. Whether your family possesses some scraps of deeper knowledge, or you've simply learned about magic from listening to so many fanciful tales, you've garnered a deeper appreciation of magic. You gain Reliable 2 on all Magic Arts Tests, and once per session you may spend 1 Grit before rolling a Magic Arts Test to make that roll Inspired.

FACE YOUR FEARS

10 Fortune. Requires Ghassulian Origin.

Ghassulian culture places an emphasis on even mindedness and being mentally prepared to deal with adversity. Once per session, you may spend 1 Grit to block 5 Animity damage.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

10 Fortune. Requires Ghassulian Origin.

In the Ghassulian tradition, the line between science, magic, and philosophy is weak, and education in one bleeds over to another. If a character is trained in Magic Arts, Humanities, or Science, they gain Reliable 2 on all skill Tests to know things using any of those skills (but not for practical uses of the skills). If all of these skills are at Trained, instead gain Reliable 3 on all rolls to know things using those skills.

HEAD START

10 Fortune. Requires Upper Middle Caste or above.

You had every advantage growing up, and it enabled you to excel. Increase your maximum Grit by 2.

SURVIVOR

10 Fortune. Requires Lower or Undercity Caste.

Maybe it was the Fairy Wars, maybe it was a disaster, or maybe it was the just the grueling traumas of poverty, but you've taken all of what the world has thrown at you and kept ticking. Roll 1 additional die whenever you make a Grit Test (see "Grit Tests" on pg 25), and whenever you succeed on a Grit Test you heal 3 Animity damage.

FAE-TOUCHED

10 Fortune.

Your character is fae-touched—a distinction whose origins are shrouded in the mystery of the fae, but provide some benefits. Any fae-touched creatures, including the character, recognizes other fae-touched creatures within 10m as being fae-touched. Your character always knows the ambient level of mana and when they are in Seelie and Unseelie Zones (see "Seelie and Unseelie Zones" on pg 276).

GOOD REPUTATION

10 Fortune.

You have a strong connection in your Community. You gain +1 Base Regard with your Community and all starting Relations.

IDEOLOGUE

10 Fortune.

You have a strong conviction and deep connections to one of the ideological movements among the Envoys. Increase your Base Regard with your Ideology Faction by 3, and whenever your ideology Value is triggered, gain 1 Grit.

JOIE DE VIVRE

10 Fortune.

Growing up, you learned to take your pleasures when you could get them and live in the moment, and frag the consequences. Whenever you indulge an Impulse, you gain one additional Grit and heal 2 Animity damage.

DRAWBACKS

Each character may take one drawback. If they do, they gain an additional 10 Fortune to spend on Background Paradigm Abilities.

SHAME TO YOUR HOUSE

Drawback. Requires Chaldani Origin.

In Chaldani culture, your actions reflect on your entire family. Whenever you violate one of your Community Values or otherwise diminish the reputation of your family, you take 3 Animity damage. You continue to take 1 Animity damage at the end of each Downtime until you remedy the situation (GM discretion) or take a Downtime Action to smooth things over.

INTELLECTUAL SHUT-IN

Drawback. Requires Churuqian Origin.

The Churuqian preference for intellectual pursuits over physical ones has led to you being particularly uncomfortable with physical tasks. You gain one additional instance of Dulled on all Physicality and Melee Combat Tests.

GHASSULIAN NIHILISM

Drawback. Requires Ghassulian Origin.

"All will die" is a common Ghassulian epithet, deployed to indicate everything from "I don't care" to "This person takes themselves too seriously." Many Ghassulians take this strain of nihilism to heart, and are perhaps a tad more accepting of what fate has in store for them. Decrease maximum Grit by 2, but increase maximum Animity by 2.

BABYLONIAN MONOCULTURE

Drawback. Requires Babylonian Origin.

With all the culture and glamour of Neo Babylon, it's possible to lose perspective on the rest of the world. You start with only Common-Ur as a language, and gain one instance of Dulled on all Humanities Tests to know about cultures outside of Neo Babylon.

STANDOFFISH

Drawback. Requires Altaipheran.

Altaipherans have a not entirely undeserved reputation for being insular and cold to strangers, preferring to wait for people to prove themselves by actions before warming up to them. Either by sharing this view, or simply lack of practice, you struggle in first encounters. Decrease the Regard of anyone you meet by 3 for your first time meeting them, and you may never make first impression Tests.

ALOOF

Drawback. Requires De Broceliande Origin.

De Broceliande cultural products are stereotypically utilitarian, and many people from Val Broceliande show an indifference to the art and culture of others, either through an honest lack of interest or a sense of superiority and disdain. Either way, you gain an instance of Dulled on all Humanities, Arts, and Influence Tests when interacting with art, culture, or entertainment from a culture other than your own.

OUTSIDER

Drawback.

Perhaps you're new, or perhaps you've never really fit in. In either case, you're less connected than most to your Community. Decrease your starting Regard with your Community by 3.

INEPT

Drawback.

You are particularly inept at a skill. You gain an additional instance of Dulled whenever you Test that skill. If you are Untrained in the skill, you are not assumed to be able to accomplish basic tasks. Your unfamiliarity also impairs your ability to benefit or protect against other's uses of the skill—negative effects targeting you (such as attacks or opposed Tests) gain Augment 3, while beneficial effects using the skill have half the normal effect.

CONSUMMATE CONSUMER

Drawback.

Maybe the ad-tech on your Halo just had your number, maybe you're a tech enthusiast and early adopter, or maybe you just like shiny things. Whatever the cause, you're the ideal customer to the many varied corporations of Neo Babylon, always buying new things you don't really need. Any Downtime you don't purchase an object worth at least 3 Fortune, spend 1 Fortune (on something cool, glamorous, but ultimately not helpful).

POOR IMPULSE CONTROL

Drawback.

You are particularly susceptible to your impulses. At the end of each Downtime, if you have not triggered an Impulse since the end of the last Downtime, take 3 Irresistible Animity damage.

AVERSION TO VIOLENCE

Drawback.

Due to some combination of your values and your experiences, you are ill-prepared for violent situations. You may not apply Adamant to violent situations, and you take 3 Irresistible Animity damage the first time you or an ally takes Health damage due to violence each scene.

TROUBLEMAKER

Drawback.

You're a known problem with the authorities—you've gotten in trouble in the past, possibly even spending a chunk of time in the purgatorium. This has led you to be singled out by the authorities. Reduce your Regard with the Lawjacks (or other authority, if applicable) by 5.

UNRELIABLE ASSISTIVE TECH

Drawback.

You rely on an assistive device to accomplish common daily tasks (e.g. a wheelchair to move around, assistive technology to see). While in most situations this enables you to function normally, your assistive device occasionally fails (either because it's in a non-accommodating environment, it is unreliable, or it has been damaged or stolen). In such a case, the GM or player may propose to trigger this Drawback following the rules for Impulses (see pg 27), paying 3 GM Grit or gaining 3 Grit as per normal, and suffering a downside or consequence appropriate to their assistive device. Note, this drawback only applies to assistive devices with a noticeable chance of failure—for most people cybertech clears this bar, though some sub-par cybertech or particularly difficult medical complications can cause cybertech to be unreliable and meet the threshold for this drawback.

If you ever cease to need your assistive device, you may pay 10 Fortune to lose this drawback.

Relation Paradigms

Relation Paradigms are divided into two categories: Community and personal Relations. The Community paradigm is built together as a group (see "Creating a Community" on pg 76). Personal Relations are chosen as part of character creation (see "Step 7. Choose Relations" on pg 94).

RELATIONS

Each character begins with 30 Fortune to spend on this category, though this may be augmented with additional Fortune from character creation.

Example Relations created with these rules can be found below (see "Example Relations" on pg 135).

LINKING RELATIONS WITH FACTIONS

Personal Relations characters gain from the Personal Relations Paradigm reflect people they know from any of their walks of life. Because of this, many (but not all) of their Relations may be part of their Community, or a relevant Faction (either one created in (pg 82), from an ideology (see pg 90), or chosen from the Minor or Major Faction abilities below.

Doing so links the Relation with the Faction or Community: whenever (after character creation) the Regard or Power of that Faction or Community go up, all linked characters also go up. This can be a useful (and effective) way to boost a bunch of Relations at once as you build your Relation with a group—but it also means that if anything bad happens you might find that suddenly none of your Relations are willing to help you out...

MINOR RELATION

2 Fortune.

You have a relationship with someone that is either only marginally stronger than your overall Relation with the Community, or with someone who is less able to help you than the typical aid you can find in the Community. Pick one of the following options:

- **Big shot:** Power 6 Regard 1. You know someone who can do a lot, and they take your calls—but not much more than that without convincing.
- **Personal Connection:** Power 4 Regard 6. You know a typical member of the Community on a first name basis, which makes them easier to find and gives you a slight edge in asking for favors.
- **Little Guy:** Power 2, Regard 11. You have a strong relationship with someone of relatively modest skills, but they're still willing to help you out from time to time.
- **Dependent:** Power 1, Regard 15. You have someone only marginally able to help you out, but nonetheless who has a deep relationship with you.

You may take this option as many times as you want, each time gaining a different minor Relation.

NORMAL RELATION

10 Fortune.

You have a substantial relationship with someone that can provide you with substantial benefits in your work. Pick one of the following options:

- **Sponsor:** Power 6 Regard 5. You know someone more competent than you who's willing to do you some favors from time to time.
- **Friend:** Power 4, Regard 10. You have a strong, capable friend you can rely on.
- **Sidekick:** Power 2, Regard 15. You have a best friend, family member, or other who is willing to back you up against anything, even if their backing is only worth so much.

You may take this option as many times as you want, each time gaining a different normal Relation.

MAJOR RELATION

20 Fortune.

You have a substantial relationship with someone that can provide you with substantial benefits in your work. Pick one of the following options:

- **Friend in High Places:** Power 8 Regard 5. You have a VIP willing to extend minor favors to you.
- **Patron:** Power 6 Regard 10. You have a mentor, family member, or other Relation more influential or powerful than you but nonetheless solidly in your corner.
- **Ally:** Power 4, Regard 15. You have a competent friend or family member willing to help you however they can (as long as you don't take advantage of them).

You may take this option as many times as you want, each time gaining a different major Relation.

Relations: Step by Step

Each Relation has five key components: Who they are (description), how powerful they are (Power), how much they like you (Regard), what they're good at (Primary Skill), and what they can do for you (Archetype). Many relations also have unique Aspects which help define them. This is broken down in the following steps.

Step 1: Pay Fortune for a base template

Option	Fortune Cost	Power	Regard
Big Shot	2	6	1
Personal Connection	2	4	6
Little Guy	2	2	11
Dependent	2	1	15
Sponsor	10	6	5
Friend	10	4	10
Sidekick	10	2	15
Friend in High Places	20	8	5
Patron	20	6	10
Ally	20	4	15
Indifferent Institution (Faction)	10	7	0
Known Group (Faction)	10	5	5
Friendly Club (Faction)	10	3	10
Helpful Benefactors (Faction)	20	6	5
Friendly Group (Faction)	20	4	10
Devoted Followers (Faction)	20	2	15
Increase Power †	+5	+1	-
Increase Regard †	+2	-	+1

† Double cost for Factions. Maximum 20 Fortune per Relation at character creation.

Step 2: Pick a Primary Skill

Arts (pg 15), for artists and others who can inspire, distract, or create

Deception (pg 15), for forgers, conmen, or criminals

Humanities (pg 16), for scholars, lawyers, and other similar experts

Influence (pg 16), for leaders, businesspeople, and glad-handers

Magic Arts (pg 16), for those with magic ability

Melee Combat (pg 16), for gangers, martial artists, and bouncers

Observation (pg 16), for journalists, watch-dogs, and town gossips

Physicality (pg 16), for athletes, burglars, and manual laborers

Piloting (pg 16), for jumpers and other vehicles operators

Ranged Combat (pg 16), for hunters, soldiers, and other trained combatants

Sciences (pg 16), for scientists and medical professionals

Tech (pg 16), for breachers, mechanics, and engineers

Step 3: Pick An Archetype

Care (pg 122), who help you recover from physical or mental damage

Clout (Faction Only) (pg 122), a group with authority over some aspect of life that can help you out

Connection (pg 122), a Relation who can connect you to other people

Dealer (pg 122), a source for illegal goods

Employer (pg 123), an employer that can help you earn Fortune in Downtime

Information (pg 123), a source of information on a specific topic

Melting Pot (Faction Only) (pg 123) a grab bag with a chance of helping you out for anything

Swag (pg 123) a Relation that can loan you or give discounts on gear

Teacher (pg 123), a Relation that can help train you in a skill or paradigm

Transport (pg 124), a character that can help you (and your contraband goods) get places

Step 4: Pick any Aspects (Optional)

Paternalistic (pg 124), a Relation that cares about you more than they're willing to do what you ask of them

Unreliable (pg 124), a Relation that makes up for their flakiness with extra vigor when they are available

Unshakable (pg 124), a Relation who will stick by you when no one else will (costs double)

Toxic (pg 125), a Relation who being around isn't good for you (-5 Fortune, min 1 Fortune)

Supportive (pg 125), a Relation that boosts your max Grit and helps you regain Grit (costs +15 Fortune)

Transactional (pg 125), a Relation unwilling to do favors, but happy to accept Fortune.

Multi-talented (pg 125), a Relation with multiple abilities (increase cost by 50% per number of additional primary skills and archetypes)

Dues (pg 125), a Faction that requires payment to remain in their good graces (reduce cost by half).

MINOR FACTION

10 Fortune.

You have a connection to an additional Faction that is either less powerful than your Community or that you have a substantially weaker connection too. You gain one of the following options as a Relation:

- **Indifferent Institution:** Power 7 Regard 0. You have a tenous connection to a powerful Faction (A Regard zero Relation allows you to reliably contact them and use their ability, though getting substantial help may require convincing).
- **Known Group:** Power 5 Regard 5. You have modest connection to a group of similar Power to your Community.
- **Friendly Club:** Power 3, Regard 10. You have a strong connection to a minor Faction.

MAJOR FACTION

20 Fortune.

You have a connection to an additional major Faction that plays a substantial role in your life. You gain one of the following options:

- **Helpful Benefactors:** Power 6 Regard 5. You have a connection to a powerful Faction.
- **Friendly Group:** Power 4, Regard 10 Relation. You have a strong connection to a modest Faction.
- **Devoted Followers:** Power 2, Regard 15 Relation. You have a small group intensely devoted to you.

Customizing Relations

For simplicity and speed of creation, each Relation is given a standardized cost, Power, and Regard, however players may increase or decrease the cost of Relations by +1 Power for each 5 Fortune of cost and +1 Regard for each 2 points of Fortune (doubled for Factions). Each Relation costs at least one Fortune, and starting Relations may not cost more than 20 Fortune. A player may choose to boost their player character's Regard with a Community Relation this way, though the Fortune cost to the Community counts towards the 20 Fortune limit.

COMMUNITY PARADIGM

The Community Paradigm is unique in that it belongs to the group as a whole rather than any single character. The group gains 100 Fortune to collectively spend as part of Community creation.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Every Community has prominent members with unique talents that can help the PCs from time to time. Community Relations use the same rules as personal relations, including cost.

Community Relations are tied to the Power and Regard of the Community, by default Power 4, Regard 5 (see pg 77). If a character's Regard with their Community is increased or decreased, the Regard of all members in that Community increase or decrease as well. Similarly, if the Power of a Community increases or decreases, the Power of all characters tied to the Community increases or decreases as well (as they gain the benefits of better infrastructure and resources).

Example Relations

Who	Community/ Faction	Description	Archetype/ Aspect	Primary Skill	Power	Regard	Fortune Cost
Little Sibling	Community	You're close to a young sibling who you are generally protective of, but will do anything for you and has a remarkable knowledge of current pop culture.	Information: Pop Culture	Humanities	1	15	2
Old Friend	Community	You have an old friend who never developed a particular knack, but they own an old beater of a truck and are willing to help you move stuff with it whenever you ask.	Transporter	Piloting	2	11	2
Baru	Consecrated (Ideology Faction)	You're a devout believer in the wisdom of the gods, and show up to prayers often enough that the local Baru knows who you are and is willing to provide you with advice and a bit of help if you ask.	Service	Magic Arts	4	6	2
Former Employer	Community	You did a small job a while back for an important member of your community, and while they won't give you a handout, they'll at least listen to you.	Employer	Influence	6	1	2
Confidante	Community	You have a friend who is always willing to listen to you and help cheer you up when you've run into a rough spot and need to clear up some Animity damage.	Care/Supportive	Arts	2	15	10
Obnoxiously Competent Sibling	Corporation	You love your sibling (and they love you), but that doesn't stop a little bit of a rivalry as they seem to excel at everything they do and have gotten an important position in the legal department of a nearby prominent corporation.	Connection, Service, Information: Law/ Multi-talented +2, Paternalistic	Humanities, Influence, Arts	4	10 (5/15*)	20†
Crime Boss	Crime Syndicate	You've gotten in the good graces of an influential crime boss who might be willing to do some things for you—if you'll do some things for them...	Connection/ Transactional	Influence	6	5	10
Rock Star	None	Long ago, you were friends, but they made it big. They promise you that next time they're around they'll hang out... but until then they're happy to hook you up with the various people in their orbit.	Connection/ Unreliable	Arts	8	5	20
VIP (Very Important Parent)	Community	One of your parents was busy changing the world, and less busy in your life. They never had time for little favors or the things that mattered to you—but if push came to shove they would do whatever they could to save you.	Connection/ Paternalistic	Science	6	10 (5/15*)	20
Best Friend	Community	Your Best Friend has been with you every step of the way, and is a competent breacher you can rely on whenever you need technical assistance (and vice versa).	Service	Tech	4	15	20

*Reflects Modifier from Paternalistic †Reflects Cost from Multi-talented

Sample Community Relations

Here are some common Relations that you might find in many communities.

Artist: Your Community has a prominent artist capable of crafting a wide range of goods. With a good cause, you can convince them to make something for you, or at least influence their next masterpiece. *Archetype: Service, Primary Skill: Arts. Power 4, Regard 10*

Baru: Your Community is home to a congregation led by a prominent Baru who is willing to use their sacred magic (of whatever flavor they might possess), to aid the Community and its Envoys. *Archetype: Service, Primary Skill: Magic Arts. Power 4, Regard 10*

Doctor: You have someone skilled in providing medical care, whether they're a Doctor, Medic, Traditional Healer, Veterinarian or anyone else with practical hands on experience treating a variety of illnesses. They're willing to provide basic care to whoever needs it and waive costs to those who can't afford it. *Archetype: Care, Primary Skill: Science. Power 4, Regard 10*

Employer: Maybe they run the biggest business in town, or maybe they're an extra creative entrepreneur, but this character always has room for another set of hands and stanz to give out for those willing to do some work. *Archetype: Employer, Primary Skill: Influence. Power 4, Regard 10*

Maker: Your Community is home to a talented maker with a well equipped machine shop and a willingness to create things on commission, or loan out some of their inventory. *Archetype: Swag, Primary Skill: Tech. Power 4, Regard 10*

Scientist: Someone in your Community is an expert in a field of science. When it comes to their specialty, they're always willing to lend their expertise (often at length). *Archetype: Information (pick specialty), Primary Skill: Science. Power 4, Regard 10*

Teacher: Your Community has a well regarded teacher who has helped and trained anyone in the Community who seeks their knowledge. *Archetype: Teacher (pick specialty), Primary Skill: Any. Power 4, Regard 10*

RESOURCES

Some assets are not people, but things, places, traditions, or even ideas. Resources are available to any member of the Community that has a positive Regard with the Community. Resources always count as having the same Regard with PCs as the Community and cannot have their Regard changed apart from the Community. Available resources are listed below:

ARCHIVE

10 Fortune.

Your Community has a library or other source of records that document the local goings on, history, and other important information. All Humanities Tests to know something about the Community gain Reliable 3. If a character takes a Downtime Action to look something up about the Community, they gain +2d6 on the roll.

LAND TRUST

10 Fortune.

The Community has communal housing that it can provide to their Envoys or others who need it. For every 5 Regard you have with your Community, you decrease the cost of lifestyle maintenance by 1, to a minimum of 0 (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37).

PERFORMANCE SPACE

10 Fortune.

This is a resource where PCs and NPCs alike can promote, indulge, train, and share their artistic abilities and passions. Characters may spend 1 Downtime Action to make an Arts Test while performing here. Characters may also spend 1 Downtime Action to attend a performance. If a PC is performing, the TN for the Arts Test is 13. If they succeed, those performing and attending gain 4 Animity or 2 Grit (which can be increased by a Dynamic or Critical Success). On a Failure, no Grit or Animity is gained, and on a Dynamic Failure, all PCs involved lose 2 Animity and 1 Grit.

ELLU ESHIRTU

10 Fortune.

A place of pilgrimage where the gods are said to move more often and more clearly. Communities benefit from these sacred shrines due to pilgrims, but also spiritually. Pilgrims say the shrine grounds them and gives them courage to face the world.

Spend 1 Downtime Action to visit the Ellu and gain 3 Adamant until the next Downtime.

EQUIPMENT

10 Fortune.

Your Community has a communal supply of gear. This might represent an armory, a motor pool, special communications equipment, or any material object you can think of. The gear is available based on the table below:

Gear Cost	Availability
<5 Fortune	Available to everyone in the Community
5-10 Fortune	Readily available for one person at a time
11-20 Fortune	Available for one person most of the time
21+ Fortune	Available for one person for exceptionally important uses to the Community

SPECTACLE/WONDER

10 Fortune.

Some things in life are so beautiful, so awe-inspiring, that they demand recognition. This is such a place, and it is in your Community. Players and GM should describe what this spectacle or wonder is and why it is so fascinating. Players can spend time showing others around, increasing their love for it, and helping others fall in love with it as well.

Spend 1 Downtime Action to recover 1 Grit and 4 Animity.

DEN OF INIQUITY

10 Fortune.

If your Community has a den of iniquity, choose 1 type of indulgence and describe the Den of Iniquity.

When you take the Indulge Impulse Downtime Action (see "Indulge Impulse" on pg 36) for an indulgence that matches the Den of Iniquity, you may spend a Fortune. If you do you gain 5 Grit and the GM gains 3 Grit.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

10 Fortune.

You have a vegetable garden, small farm, or other source of food capable of covering some of your Community's food needs. For every 5 Regard you have with your Community, you decrease the cost of lifestyle maintenance by 1, to a minimum of zero (see "Maintain Lifestyle" on pg 37).

COMMUNITY UPGRADES

The following options are available to upgrade the Community:

UPGRADE POWER

20 Fortune. Requires 100 Fortune spent on Community paradigm total (excluding starting Fortune).

Bit by bit, you've made your Community stronger and more notable. You increase the Power of your Community by one. This increases the Power of all Relations (both Community Relations and personal relations) tied to your Community. This may be taken multiple times, each time requiring 100 additional Fortune spent on the Community paradigm.

UPGRADE CASTE

20 Fortune. Requires 100 Fortune spent on Community paradigm total (excluding starting Fortune).

You've built up the wealth, infrastructure, prevailing wages, and connections to slowly increase the standard of living in your Community. Each player may choose to increase their caste by one level (either now or in the future) by taking a debt (see pg 94) (gaining no Fortune from it, as the Fortune instead goes to increasing their standard of living). A given character may only benefit from this once per upgrade.

This may be taken multiple times, each time requires 100 additional Fortune spent on the Community paradigm.

Trained Paradigms

Trained paradigms represent specific and intense training in the totally mundane; the ways in which what your PC has experienced and worked at sets them apart. They cover specialized training in professions, like the Researcher paradigm, as well as more innate or generally applicable paradigms like Brawler and Face. Often, these paradigms represent roles that people play in society and how they are described by others they encounter.

These paradigms primarily focus on growing and enhancing skills, and are used in conjunction with them; paradigms of this type are sometimes gated behind an appropriate skill rank. Knowledge and abilities don't come freely after all.

BRAWLER

The only honest way to fight is up close and personal. There's no hiding exactly what you mean to do, no way to avoid looking them in their eyes.
— Samu Enlimar, Heavyweight Boxing Champion

Brawlers are fighters ready for close combat and able to take some blows and keep on ticking.

Taking any abilities from the Brawler paradigm requires being trained in Melee Combat.

REFLEXIVE COMBAT

10 Fortune.

In the first Round of any cinematic, you may add +1d6 to combat Tests while suffering –2 Guard.

MARTIAL ARTS

10 Fortune.

You know how to use your body as a weapon. Your unarmed attacks do 2d6 damage instead of 1d6.

GRAPPLER

10 Fortune.

You gain +1d6 on Melee Combat Tests to grapple. A target grappled by you has an additional Consequence (including adding one instance of Dulled).

DISARM

10 Fortune.

As a Main Action, make a Melee Combat Test against the guard of a target in **T** range. On a Success, you may knock a held item (such as a tool or weapon) from their hands onto the ground. On a Dynamic Success you may instead take the item into your possession. On a Critical Success, you may take an additional Main Action to immediately use the stolen item.

BLOCK

10 Fortune. Interrupt.

When you are targeted by a Melee Attack Test, you may spend 1 Grit to activate this ability. Roll a Melee Combat Test and replace your guard with the result of the Test.

RIPOSTE

10 Fortune. Interrupt. Requires Block and two other Brawler paradigm abilities.

When you use the Block ability, if your roll is greater than the attacker's guard you may spend 3 Grit to treat your roll as a Melee Attack against them, doing damage as normal.

GRUNT

10 Fortune.

When you spend Grit to block Health damage, each point of Grit blocks 2 points of Health damage.

GRUNT 2

20 Fortune. Requires Grunt and two other brawler paradigm abilities.

When you spend Grit to block Health damage, each point of Grit blocks 4 points of Health damage.

STREET TOUGH

10 Fortune.

Once per session, you may reduce incoming Health damage by 5.

STREET TOUGH 2

20 Fortune. Requires Street Tough.

When you use the Street Tough ability, instead block incoming Health damage by 15.

BLOODED ENFORCER

20 Fortune. Requires Street Tough, Street Tough 2, and 1 other Brawler paradigm ability.

You may use the ability from Street Tough one additional time per session. When you use this ability, gain +1d6 on any Melee Combat Test on your next turn.

KNEECAP

10 Fortune.

When you make a Dynamic Success on a Melee Combat Test, apply a Consequence (including adding one instance of Dulled) to the target until they recieve healing. On a Critical Success, instead apply 2 Consequences.

THUG

20 Fortune. Requires three other Brawler paradigm abilities.

You give no thought to consequences, only respect. You may take 3 Irresistible damage before making a Melee Attack to gain +5 on the roll.

PUNCH IT

10 Fortune. Requires three other Brawler paradigm abilities.

Where possible, probable, or dramatically appropriate, and at GM's discretion, you may take 5 Irresistible Health damage and make a Melee Attack in place of any other skill Test.

TAKE THE HIT

10 Fortune. Interrupt.

When an ally within 10m is targeted by an attack, you may spend 1 Grit to move between the attacker and the ally. The attack targets you instead.

FACE

You win 100% of fights that don't happen.
— Davina of House Harra, Envoy

Some options in this paradigm give Pressure Points. Pressure Points can be spent, on a 1 to 1 basis, to lower the Vigilance of a target before a particular action. Pressure Points are lost when used or when a cinematic or scene ends. At any time, you may have a maximum number of Pressure Points equal to three plus the sum of your ranks in Influence and Deception.

Taking any abilities from the Face paradigm requires being trained in Influence and Deception.

DON'T GIVE UP
10 Fortune. Main Action.

Spend 1 Grit. Target Ally (not yourself) gains +2d6 and is Inspired on their next Test.

BELONGING EVERYWHERE
10 Fortune.

When you encounter an NPC for the first time, their Regard is improved by one. You start concealment tracks directed at you (including as part of a group you're in) at +3 concealment when attempting to blend in using disguise or social infiltration.

THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED!
10 Fortune.

During each Downtime, you may reset a single Relation's Regard to their Base Regard once without taking a Downtime Action.

STAND UP
10 Fortune. Interrupt.

When an ally would take Animity damage from an attack, you may take it instead. Gain 1 Pressure Point.

I CAN SEE THROUGH YOU
10 Fortune. Interrupt.

Use when you've rolled a Dynamic or Critical Success using any skill against an opponent's Vigilance. Ask one of the following questions about the target. The GM must answer honestly. Gain 1 Pressure Point.

- What is their current mood/Regard?
- How could I help them?
- What is their motivation?
- How can they be hurt?

LOOK AT ME!
10 Fortune. Main Action.

You know how to grab attention. Roll Deception versus target's Vigilance. On a Success, the target takes a -5 penalty on any Tests targeting someone other than you as long as you use a Backup Action each turn to continue distracting the target.

I KNOW A GAL
10 Fortune.

You may spend 2 Fortune or 5 Grit at any time to reveal a previously undescribed minor Relation (see "Relations" on pg 132); you gain that Relation.

WARNINGS AND RUMORS OF WARNINGS
10 Fortune.

Each Downtime you may ask the GM for Rumors you've heard. Pick one topic you're interested in—gain a Rumor (see "Rumor, Risk and Ruin" on pg 251) related to that topic, as well as one additional unrelated Rumor chosen by the GM.

CHARMER
10 Fortune.

You gain 1 Pressure Point whenever you take the Charm action (see pg 43). All such rolls are Inspired.

CALM
10 Fortune.

You get +1d6 on your Test when you take the De-escalate action (see pg 57). If you succeed you gain 1 Pressure Point.

THREAT
10 Fortune.

You gain +1d6 when taking the Threaten action (pg 45). If you inflict Animity damage as part of a threat, increase the damage by 2.

I'LL GET US IN
10 Fortune. Requires 3 other Face paradigm abilities.

Where possible, probable, or dramatically appropriate, and at GM's discretion, you may take 5 Irrestible Animity damage and make an Influence or Deception Test in place of any other skill Test.

LOOK AT THESE EYES
10 Fortune.

On your first successful first impressions Test in a scene you gain 2 Pressure Points.

SHAKE IT OFF
10 Fortune.

Gain Adamant 2 against social situations.

NETWORKING

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Face paradigm abilities.

You know lots of people. Gain 40 Fortune worth of Relations (see "Relations" on pg 132), and whenever you use Boost Relationship action (see pg 37), you may boost Base Regard by up to three points (spending Fortune as normal).

THE LONG GAME

20 Fortune. Requires Charmer.

This ability can only be used outside of a cinematic, and can only be used once per scene. Roll an Influence or Deception Test versus target's Vigilance. On a Success, you gain a special Pressure Point that isn't lost until used and can only be used on this same target. You may have as many Pressure Points from this ability as the greater of your ranks in Deception or Influence.

ARTIST

We are the sum of our tears.
—Graffiti on the Breach Wall, author unknown

While often underrated, it is the Artists who can make a society succeed or fail, even while being difficult to quantify. While there are numerous facets to creation, this paradigm encompasses many: from visual works to the movement arts, and the performing arts as well. Many of the Fine Arts enjoyed in Neo Babylon society are rooted in archetypes: the stock characters of commedia dell'arte, the Kashimogo markings of Noh theatre, and more, all use familiar symbols and dominate the artistic space of high society. In the Undercity and elsewhere, however, the iconoclastic arts of a new generation clash with the establishment in ways that exemplify that creativity, while sometimes threatened, has yet to be extinguished in the world of Subversion.

Taking any abilities from the Artist paradigm requires being trained in the Arts skill.

FINE ARTS

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 on all Influence and Deception Tests in any environment restricted to Upper-Middle Class or higher, or that required at least 1 Fortune to get in.

GIFTED

10 Fortune.

Once per session, spend 1 Grit while undertaking an artistic endeavor and make a TN 12 Arts Test. On a Success restore 3 Grit to an ally.

INSPIRE

10 Fortune.

You can inspire people to help restore their Animity. Make a TN 12 Arts Test, restoring 5 Animity damage on a Success. A character can only benefit from Inspire once per Session.

POPULAR CULTURE

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 to Influence Tests with individuals from Lower-Middle Caste or lower.

POINT OF INTEREST

10 Fortune.

You've created something that others love to appreciate. As a result, your Community has become known for your work.

Once per Downtime, you can use a Downtime Action to give a tour, discuss art with fans, or teach others the basics of your art. You gain 1 Fortune and the Fortune cost for a Community paradigm ability is decreased by 2 until the start of the next Downtime.

CHOSEN FAMILY
10 Fortune.

While many see artists as singularly reclusive and anti-social, the truth is many find solace in collectives or practice art together in a troupe or community. When you take the same Downtime Action as another PC, you both heal 2 Animity damage.

IMITATOR
10 Fortune.

You may use Arts instead of Deception when making physical forgeries or disguises.

CATHARSIS
20 Fortune. Requires Gifted.

Art of all forms does not just inspire and distract, but brings itself to a place where the audience comes away relieved and refreshed. You help people through that emotional journey. You may use the gifted ability twice per session, and using it does not require Grit.

CREATE SHALMU
10 Fortune.

You use your incredible skill to attempt to create a shalmu, or an image, of one of the divine powers. (see "Shalmu" on pg 104). In order to create a shalmu, you must have a sacred mantle or join with someone who does. If you have a sacred mantle yourself, you must spend a Downtime Action and succeed on a TN 12 Arts Test. If you do not have a sacred mantle, you and someone who does have a sacred mantle may both give up a Downtime Action, and you must succeed on a TN 12 Arts Test, and the other person must succeed on a TN 12 Magic Arts Test.

DELVER

If you're not going to go off the well traveled paths, you might as well just curl up with a good book and read about the people who did the traveling.
— Hiomaris Chemico, Delver and Travel Writer

Delvers are the people who have specialized in going out to the areas still unknown or at least outside the watchful eyes of the Baru. The Delver paradigm reflects not only the wilderness and exploratory nature of the Delvers as a whole, but also how their training and habits become the ways of a street urchin or city rat left to explore and survive an urban landscape as Delvers will do often in the wilderness. Combining learned knowledge with a quick wit and physical fortitude, and near preternatural recognition of dangers, Delvers are universally sought after.

Taking any abilities from the Delver paradigm requires being trained in Humanities.

DELVER'S AWARENESS
10 Fortune.

When you spend a Grit to re-roll a die on an Observation Test, you may re-roll any dice and your roll becomes Inspired.

LET ME HELP YOU WITH THAT
10 Fortune

Whenever you succeed on a Group Test (see pg 20), all allies gain Reliable 3 on that Test.

DANGER SENSE
10 Fortune. Interrupt.

On the first Round of a cinematic, or outside of a cinematic when you are surprised by something targeting you, you may spend 1 Grit to gain +4 Guard, Aegis, or Vigilance.

BY WHIP OR SHOVEL
10 Fortune

Choose a non-weapon object. You may use that object in combat as if it were a melee weapon dealing 2d6 damage in **T** range with the nonlethal quality. Additionally, choose one of the following when purchasing this paradigm: on a Dynamic or Critical Success the target is grappled, or add Brawn to Damage.

WATCH IT!

10 Fortune

Spend 1 Grit to replace an ally's defense or roll with one of your own when avoiding a hidden attack or trap.

SCOUTING AHEAD

10 Fortune.

When you succeed on a Prepare for Trouble Downtime Action (see "Prepare for Trouble" on pg 37), everyone in your team gains 1 temporary Grit to spend on the next scene. When you are traveling and not in a cinematic you may spend 3 Grit to take the Prepare for Trouble Action.

READY FOR ANYTHING

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Delver paradigm abilities

Proper prior planning is part of your daily routine. You have drilled what to do in the case of an emergency. At any time outside of a cinematic, you may spend 1 Grit to re-roll any number of dice on your last roll. Gain Reliable 2 on all dice rerolled this way.

You can also use this ability to force a re-roll of an action targeting you. At any time outside a cinematic, you may spend 3 Grit to force a re-roll on a Test targeting you or your allies.

YOU CAN'T SURPRISE A DELVER

20 Fortune. Requires Danger Sense and 3 other Delver paradigm abilities

If a roll against your Vigilance would still succeed after using Danger Sense, spend 1 Grit to add 5 to your Vigilance.

MYSTERIOUS ENCOUNTER

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Delver paradigm abilities.

You touched something once, or saw a strange creature… and it left something behind, intuition. You have an innate sense for obscure artifacts and treasures.

You gain Inspired and Reliable 3 on all Tests dealing with any magical artifacts or ruins more than 100 years old.

GO LEFT FOR TREASURE

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Delver paradigm abilities.

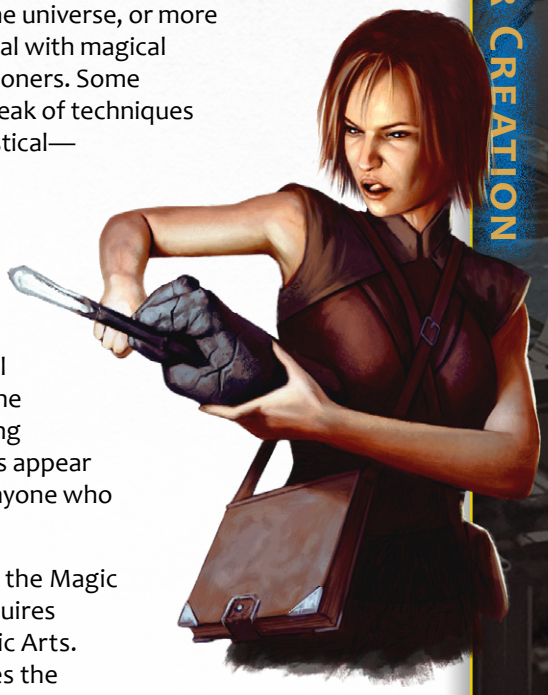
You have a sense for the patterns of places. Gain +2d6 and Reliable 3 on all Science and Observation Tests related to architecture or structures.

MAGIC HUNTER

Do not cower before a war mage, for it gives them the time they need to cast. A blade is faster than a spell—attack quickly then retreat before they have time to retort. If they ward against arrows, strike them with fire, if they ward against fire, choke them with poison.

— Alexander the Unifier's address to his troops before the defeat of the Babylonian army at Byzantium

Magical abilities are rare among the population (though less so among the elite of society). Most people lacking any innate magical ability ignore the workings of magic, leaving it to those with the ability to practically interact with it—a tendency supported by the elites of Neo Babylon which seek to keep a tight control over magical knowledge. Magic hunters are those without magical ability who nonetheless become experts in how magic works—either out of curiosity regarding the metaphysics of the universe, or more practically, how to deal with magical creatures and practitioners. Some practitioners even speak of techniques bordering on the mystical—hardening their souls from the influence of mana. Regardless of whether there are truly mystical aspects, or the teaching place mental blocks that prevent the practitioner from using magic, the techniques appear out of the grasp of anyone who uses magic.



Taking any abilities in the Magic Hunter paradigm requires being trained in Magic Arts. A character who takes the Magic Hunter paradigm may not take any Sublime, Sacred, or Arcane paradigms and does not choose a magic type. A character who has taken an Arcane, Sublime, or Sacred paradigm may not choose this paradigm.

MAGIC, IN THEORY

10 Fortune.

Gain a bonus equal to your ranks in Magic Arts plus one on all Magic Arts Tests related to identifying a magical creature, spell, or effect, or on any Tests to know anything about the theoretical basis of magic.

MUNDANE COUNTERMEASURES

10 Fortune.

You understand how magic works, and crucially, how to prevent it from working well. Gain a bonus to Aegis equal to one plus your ranks in Magic Arts.

UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS OF MAGIC

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all Shine Perception Tests Shine Perception (pg 61). Reduce the TN to spot magical effects with an Observation Test by your ranks in Magic Arts plus one.

BREAK THE FLOW OF MAGIC

10 Fortune.

Through careful study, you've learned the process others use to channel magic, and have learned how to distract casters when you take actions against them in a way to disrupt their magical abilities. When you inflict damage (either Health or Animity) you may spend one Grit for one of the following effects, as appropriate to their magical type:

- Increase any dissonance from a recently cast spell by one
- Negate one bar of harmonized mana
- Negate the effects of all meditations until the end of your next turn
- Give a temporary Consequence to a spirit or magical creature that lasts for one hour

UNDERSTAND CREATURES OF MAGIC

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all Influence and Deception Tests against spirits or other magical creatures

A MIND APART FROM MAGIC

10 Fortune.

You gain Adamant 4 against all magical effects.

MANA BREAKER

20 Fortune. Requires Break the Flow of Magic and 2 other Magic Hunter paradigm abilities.

On a Dynamic or Critical Success when you use Break the Flow of Magic, you may additionally pick the following effect, as appropriate to their magical type:

- All unattuned dissonance is immediately taken as Animity damage as if they had failed to take the attuning action on their turn.
- All bars of harmonized mana are lost and the caster takes 1 Irresistible Health damage per harmonized bar of mana.
- One meditation is ended.
- Give a Consequence to a spirit or magical creature (this Consequence is healed normally).

ELUDE MAGIC

20 Fortune. Requires Mundane Countermeasures and 2 other Magic Hunter paradigm abilities.

After learning the result of a roll that targets your Aegis, you may spend 1 Grit to increase your Aegis by 5.

NEGATE MAGICAL EFFECT

20 Fortune. Requires Mundane Countermeasures and 2 other Magic Hunter paradigm abilities.

You have learned a number of techniques to allow yourself and others another chance to resist magical effects, either by taking advantage of the limitations of magic or helping others directly resist its effects through mundane means. You may make a Magic Arts Test as a Main Action to end an ongoing effect that targeted Aegis. Make an opposed Test against the skill or entity that caused the effect. If you succeed, any ongoing effects from that ability end (this does not apply to damage the effect has already done).

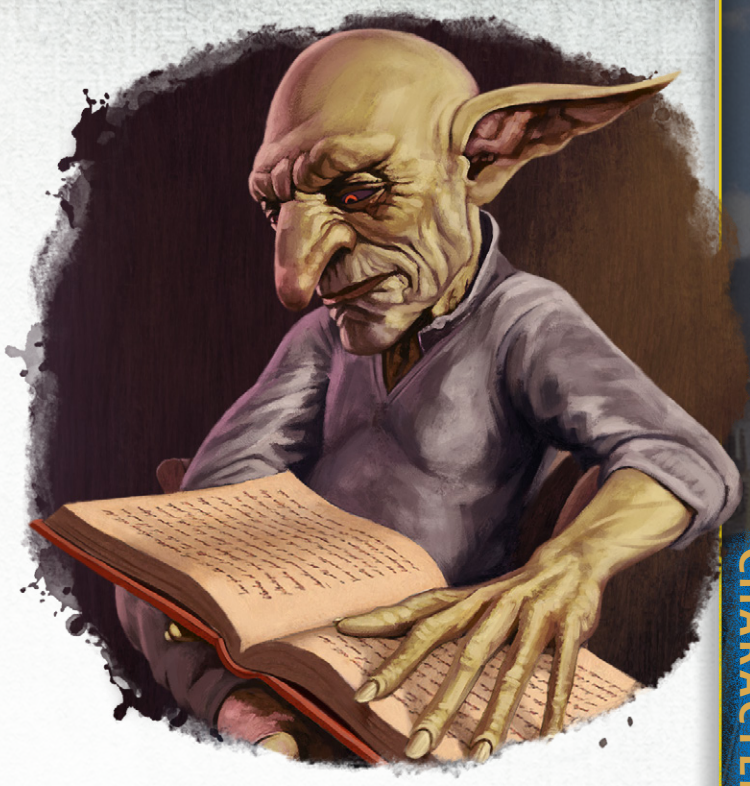
DISRUPT MAGICAL SOUL

30 Fortune. Requires Mana Breaker and 5 other Magic Hunter paradigm abilities.

Your studies of how magical practitioners and creatures use magic has progressed to the degree that you have learned how to inflict wounds that disrupt their ability to channel mana until they have the chance to recover. On a Critical Success when you use Break the Flow of Magic they lose the ability to use any magical abilities (such as from a magical paradigm or the special abilities of a spirit or magical creature) for the next hour. Additionally, make a Magic Arts Test against the target's Aegis. On a Dynamic Success on this Test, the effect lasts until they next take the rest up action. On a Critical Success, the target instead gains a Downtime Progress Track with 20 progress on it. The character is unable to use magic until the Progress Track is reduced to zero.

RESEARCHER

Time after time the river has risen and flooded. The insect leaves the cocoon to live but a moment. How long can the eye behold the sun? From the start, nothing at all has truly lasted.
— Gavash Adagin, Archivist



A mystery ready to be solved and a story waiting to be told. Researchers are the textual counterparts to investigators. Got a mass of documents that need to be sifted through? Call a researcher. Want to find the blueprints to that building you're going to hit later this week? Your researcher knows the right archivist and the right questions to ask. Want to put together the story of your community and tell it to the people who can help? The local researcher is your go-to. All they had to do to get to this point was read all the books. Yes. All of them.

Taking any abilities from the Researcher paradigm requires being trained in Humanities or Sciences.

ARCHIVE SPHINX

10 Fortune.

Your time working in Archives has helped you not only make connections but build one of your own, no matter how modest. When you use an archive resource as a Downtime Action (see "Archive" on pg 136), your roll gains Inspired and you gain 2 Grit.

WELL VERSED

10 Fortune.

When you spend a Grit to re-roll a die on a Humanities or Sciences Test, you may re-roll any dice, and your roll becomes Inspired.

LINGUISTIC PRACTICE

10 Fortune.

You gain one extra language, plus one for each rank in Humanities you have.

METHODICAL RESEARCH

10 Fortune.

When you prepare for trouble (see pg 37) using Humanities or Science, you reduce the GM Grit by an additional 1 point and shift a Progress Track by an additional 3 points.

KEPT MY NOTES

10 Fortune.

Choose either Humanities or Sciences. Gain Reliable 3 when using that skill outside of cinematic time.

TRUTHS AND MYTHS

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Researcher paradigm abilities.

You may roll Humanities instead of Magic Arts for any Test related to knowing about magic or magical creatures. Increase your Aegis by 2.

PROPAGANDA COMES IN ONE SIZE

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Researcher paradigm abilities.

Deception Tests against you take a -5 penalty.

PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Researcher paradigm abilities.

When you gain a Dynamic or Critical Success on a Humanities Test to learn something about a target, you gain an insight into their actions or weaknesses that you may use later. Once before the next Downtime, you may spend 1 Grit to add or subtract 5 to a Test they make or a Test targeting them.

MASTERMIND

"The strings of unjust power are pulled by those it is a crime to denounce."
— The Greystar

The Mastermind is usually behind it all. This paradigm represents planners, plotters, spymasters, and involuted jokers of the Subversion world. Those who invest their Fortune in being a Mastermind not only suss out what is likely to happen, but set plans in motion to ensure that it will happen, and to their benefit. Tactical plans, long cons, and webs of intrigue are all the stock in trade of a Mastermind.

Taking any abilities from the Mastermind paradigm requires being trained in Humanities and Observation.

AWARE OF THE SITUATION

10 Fortune.

You never spend Grit to act in the Surprise Round.

PLAN B

10 Fortune.

After you or an ally fails a skill Test, you may spend 1 Grit to ignore any complication preventing them from trying again. If you do so, you may suggest another way to handle the situation as a Main Action. Specify a skill and a course of action. The next PC that attempts to use the specified skill to work towards the specified course of action gains Reliable 3 on the roll.

COMMUNITY PLANNER

10 Fortune.

You and any allies gain Augment 3 on any projects to make a Community resource (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36).

TWO MOVES AHEAD

10 Fortune. Interrupt.

You may spend 1 Grit to increase your initiative score by +5 for the rest of the cinematic.

THREE MOVES AHEAD

20 Fortune. Interrupt. Requires Two Moves Ahead and 2 other Mastermind paradigm abilities.

On the first Round of a cinematic, you may spend 5 Grit to take an additional Main Action as a Backup Action.

CAREFUL MANEUVERING

10 Fortune.

You always plan your moves with great care, for the greatest effect or efficiency. Whenever you take an action to move (Main or Backup Action), you may take the Defend action as a Free Action. This does not allow you to take another Defend Action, even if you have extra Backup Actions available.

TEAM PLAYER

10 Fortune.

Whenever you take a Main Action to assist an ally (either by using teamwork or taking a beneficial action that targets them), you may take an additional Backup Action. You may use the Focus or Aim Backup Action to provide a bonus to an ally's skill Test instead of your own (up to the normal maximum bonus from Focus/Aim).

THEY NEVER SEE IT COMING

20 Fortune.

Your careful planning and talent for misdirection make it easy to blindside someone. It costs twice as much Grit for enemies to act in a Surprise

Round you initiated. At the beginning of a stealth encounter, you may spend Grit to increase your initial concealment at a cost of 1 Grit per 2 concealment (up to a maximum starting concealment of 20).

INFORMANTS

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Mastermind paradigm abilities.

You have cultivated a network of local informants who gather gossip and spy on people for you. You may spend 1 Grit at any time to gain a relevant rumor about a topic of your choice (if no helpful rumors are available, you spend no Grit). If you also have the That's Always Been the Plan paradigm ability, once per session you may use the Reinforcements benefit for zero Grit or Fortune cost.

THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE PLAN

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Mastermind paradigm abilities.

Once per session, you may use a Backup Action and spend 1 Grit to benefit from your careful and timely preparations. You must describe a brief flashback scene that reveals how you prepared for this eventuality.

- **Acquire an item:** You managed to smuggle in just the right piece of equipment for this situation! Choose an item. That item is now in your possession (and has been all along). If you do not already own the item, you must pay its Fortune cost immediately. If the item has no Fortune cost, you must either pay 1 Fortune or 1 additional Grit for it.
- **Make previous arrangements with an individual:** You made sure to butter up an NPC in a previously undeclared encounter. Improve an NPC's Regard track towards you by five. If you are in a stealth encounter, you may use this to increase your team's current Concealment level by 1d6 (2d6 with a Critical Success).
- **Reinforcements:** You made sure you had backup ready, just in case something like this happened. Choose an NPC that has a Favored (or better) Regard towards you. Pay either 1 Grit or 1 Fortune to have that NPC show up immediately and take one Main Action on your behalf. The NPC will stick around and help until the end of the conflict or scene.

ROUSER

No Voice? No Work! No Power? No Work!
— Protest chant from the Great Strike

Communities often look for leaders, and leaders will often arise at a time of conflict. The ability to influence and lead people for a cause and either through or around a system is a skill that few possess. A Rouser is at the front of a movement: literally or by using their abilities to influence how it affects the world around them. These leaders are a wide range, from the rabble rousing types inciting direct action to methodical community organizers who create and maintain strong structures for change, to politicos who blend charismatic inspiration with a knowledge of the system to create change or to reinforce the status quo. Never forget that this may be the origin of a demagogue as easily as the origin of a revolutionary.

Taking any abilities from the Rouser paradigm requires being trained in the Influence skill.

PASSIONATE CONFIDENCE

10 Fortune.

In the first Round of any cinematic, you may add +1d6 to Influence or Deception Tests while suffering –3 Vigilance.

TUNE IT OUT
10 Fortune. Interrupt.

You may spend 1 Grit to block 2 Animity damage targeting another character.

DETERMINED MIND
10 Fortune.

Once per session, you may reduce incoming Animity damage by 5.

SOOTHE
10 Fortune. Main Action.

Make a TN 12 Influence Test, on a Success, restore 3 Animity damage. A character can only benefit from Soothe once per session.

ROUSE
10 Fortune. Main Action.

Make a TN 12 Influence Test, on a Success, each ally gains +1 die to their next action. Multiple uses do not stack. Using this outside of a cinematic costs 1 Grit.

CONFUSE
10 Fortune. Main Action

Make an Influence or Deception Test against a target's Vigilance. On a Success, deal 1 Animity damage. On a Dynamic Success, target gains a Consequence until the damage is healed or the end of the scene (whichever happens first). On a Critical Success, the target gains 2 Consequences.

NO SHAME
10 Fortune. Interrupt.

When you make a successful Influence or Deception Test, you may take 5 Irresistible Animity damage to give that Test Augment 5.

STIR SHET UP
10 Fortune. Main Action.

Once per session per target, you may make an Influence Test against a targets Vigilance. On a Success, lower the target's Regard for one character by 5.

CLARION CALL
20 Fortune. Requires 2 other Rouser paradigm abilities.

Spend 3 Grit to make any roll against a target's Vigilance into a roll against all targets within 50m. Use the highest Vigilance among the crowd to determine success.

Note: If combined with Pressure Points from the face paradigm, spending Pressure Points will lower the Vigilance of the entire crowd.

MILITAIRE

I'd rather a squad of trained elves than an army of rabble, just as I'd prefer a trained surgeon over a team of butchers. More wars have been lost by incompetence than won by numbers.
—Adelante, former General of the Valkyrs

Being a trained soldier is more than shooting and running. The Militaire paradigm represents the training and experience instilled in professional and semi-professional soldiers, Lawjacks, bodyguards, militant Envoys, and more. You learn how not only to fight, but fight as a unit, use discipline and tactics to advance your goals, and dedicate yourself to something to help inspire you.

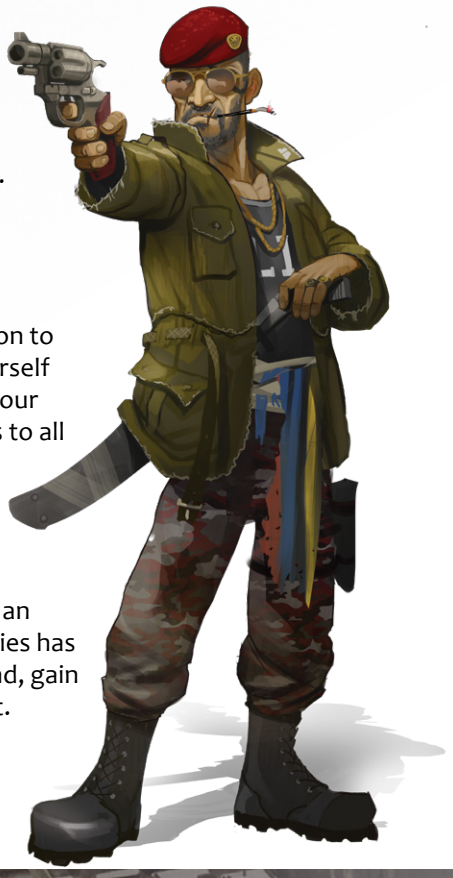
Taking any abilities from the Militaire paradigm requires being trained in the Ranged Combat skill.

PUSH ON
10 Fortune.

It costs one Grit instead of four to ignore all Dulled penalties for any roll linked to Agility or Brawn.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING
10 Fortune.

Increase your max Speed to 2.



SQUAD TACTICS
10 Fortune.

You may spend a Backup Action to coordinate the actions of yourself and a number of allies up to your Wits. This provides a +1 bonus to all Melee and Ranged attacks made by any affected character until after your next turn.

If you make an attack against an opponent that one of your allies has previously attacked this Round, gain +1 die on your own attack Test.

MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!

10 Fortune.

You gain +1d6 on Physicality Tests in chases. Once per Round you may spend 1 Grit to take the Minor Move action as a Free Action.

NO GUTS, NO GLORY!

10 Fortune.

When you spend a Backup Action to use Focus or Aim on a combat roll, you may increase the bonus by +1 for every –1 that is applied to all of your defenses (up to your maximum bonus from Focus or Aim).

COMMANDING PRESENCE

10 Fortune.

Gain +1 die on Influence Tests when you clearly and directly tell someone to do something.

Gain a +2 bonus to Deception Tests made against guards, law enforcement, and military personnel.

PHARMACEUTICAL ADVANTAGE

10 Fortune.

You were trained to go into combat under the influence of combat stimulants such as King Mud (pg 103). You gain +5 Vigilance on all addiction Tests against combat stimulants, and you may spend 1 Grit to ignore any behavioral triggers from such drug (such as King Mud's trigger to avoid retreat).

PHARMACEUTICAL HONING

20 Fortune. Requires Pharmaceutical Advantage and 2 other Militaire paradigm abilities.

You not only are trained to resist the psychological effects of combat drugs, but also to take advantage of their physiological effects to the utmost. Whenever you're under the influence of a combat drug (e.g. King Mud), you gain +2 Guard, and all combat rolls you make are Inspired.

COMBAT REFLEXES

10 Fortune.

Gain +1 Guard. Reduce the Grit cost to act in the Surprise Round by 1.

TAKE COVER!

20 Fortune. Requires Combat Reflexes and 2 other Militaire paradigm abilities.

When you use a Backup Action to Defend, the bonus applies to all of your defenses. Additionally, you may still benefit from Dynamic and Critical Successes.

I'VE SEEN TOO MUCH

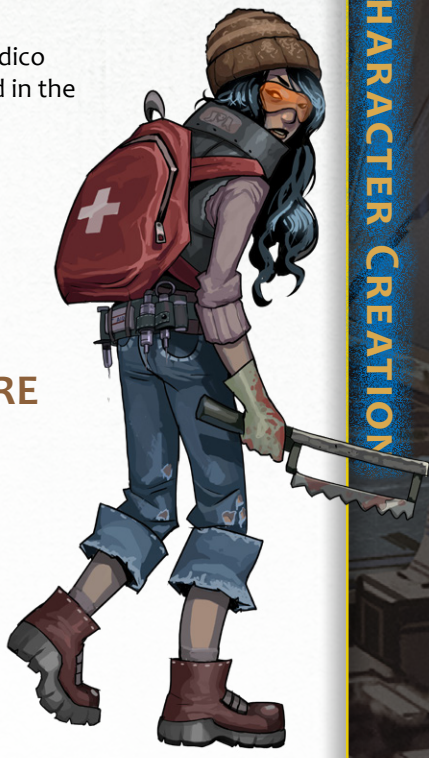
10 Fortune.

Gain Adamant 5: Death, Blood, Weapons

MEDICO

There's far more wonder and mystery in biology than in magic—every cell, every tissue, every organism holds more mysteries than you can find in any mystic tome.
—Gadja Shakanaki, Physician

The Medico paradigm covers anyone with medical experience or training, be it a doctor, medic, veterinarian, or therapist.



Taking any abilities from the Medico paradigm requires being trained in the Sciences skill.

FIRST AID

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on Science Tests while using a Medkit.

PROPHYLACTIC CARE

10 Fortune. Main Action.

You may spend 1 Grit to provide protection against one metabolic or otherwise biological threat or danger (such as a poison, disease, hypoxia, or hyperthermia, but not physical damaging attacks). Make a TN 10 Science Test. On a Success, the target gains +2 Guard, Vigilance, Aegis, and Armor against that threat for the next hour.

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

10 Fortune.

When you use the Aid Recovery Downtime Action (see "Aid Recovery" on pg 36) you may heal any combination of Health and Animity with a successful Science Test.

SURGERY

10 Fortune.

When you take the Aid Recovery Downtime Action (see "Aid Recovery" on pg 36) you may increase the TN by 3. If you do and succeed on the Test they remove a Consequence in addition to the normal effects of the roll.

BIOLOGIST
10 Fortune.

Your understanding of Medicine comes with a deep understanding of biology. Gain Reliable 3 on all Science Tests to know things about biology or medicine (including diagnoses).

BEDSIDE MANNER
10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all social Tests with anyone you have provided medical care to, or to convince someone who needs medical care to let you provide it to them.

IMPROVISED CARE
10 Fortune.

Medkits cost 1 Fortune for you. You may spend 1 Grit to gain the benefits of a Medkit even if you don't have one.

LATE NIGHT CALLS
10 Fortune.

When you use your medical skills as part of the Side Gig action (see "Side Gig" on pg 37) the GM does not gain Grit, and you may spend 1 Fortune to increase the Base Regard of a non-Faction Relation by 1 as part of the action.

EMERGENCY CARE
10 Fortune. Requires First Aid.

You do not need to spend a Grit when making a Science Test as part of using a Medkit. If you do spend a Grit, increase the amount healed by 3

RESUSCITATE
20 Fortune. Requires Emergency Care and Surgery.

You are capable of keeping people alive in even the most grievous of situations. When you apply first aid to treat a wound that caused a Consequence and the target has more than one Consequence, the target loses a Consequence.

ENGINEER

Give a man a fish, he'll be fed for a day; invent a fish catching machine, and thousands of people will have tasty fish without having to spend time fishing.
—Acacialis Geologo, Inventor

The Engineer paradigm covers the inventors, mechanics, and tinkerers who make, modify, and maintain the gear that underlies modern civilization.

Taking any abilities from the Engineer paradigm requires being trained in the Tech skill.

SPECIAL MODIFICATIONS
10 Fortune.

When you use the project option to build or modify a piece of gear with enhancements (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36), you may add one additional enhancement (pay Fortune normally).

If you begin the game with this ability, you may apply it to a number of vehicles or items of gear equal to your ranks in Tech +1.

INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIALIST
10 Fortune.

When you make a Community Resource (see "Resources" on pg 136) as a project (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36), you pay one fifth the normal cost (instead of half).

MAKER
10 Fortune.

You gain Augment 3 on all Tech Tests to build or repair objects.

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE
10 Fortune.

You may roll Tech instead of Science for any Test related to math, engineering, or physics. You gain Reliable 3 on all Tests to figure out the function of a device or piece of equipment.

CYBERWARE TECHNICIAN

10 Fortune.

You can craft and upgrade cyberware. You may build cyberware using the rules for gear (see "Advance Downtime Track" on pg 36), and gain the normal decrease in costs. Installing cyberware built this way requires a TN 13 Science Test. On a Failure, the recipient takes 3d6 physical damage and gains a Consequence.

Any cyberware surgery you lead or assist with (unless you're the patient) gains Reliable 3.

JUNKYARD MAESTRO

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Engineer paradigm abilities.

You may decrease the Fortune cost of any drone or vehicle you buy or build by 30% (round the final cost up). However, the first time each Action Mode you use a vehicle or drone purchased in this way, it takes 1 Irresistible Physical damage.

WATCHDOG

Never trust people, they're fallible and always lie. Trust the evidence. If the evidence doesn't make sense, the problem is that you're a person.

— Consulting Detective Sappira Tulkas

Watchdogs investigate, find things out, solve crimes, and uncover secret affairs on behalf of private parties, investigating secrets that the Lawjacks are uninterested in, either because its a crime the Lawjacks don't prioritize enforcing or because the behavior is legal.

The term has come to refer to anyone who undertakes investigative work for public, semipublic, or private employers from the Gang Lieutenant in La Sanctuaire to the Consulting Detectives employed by the Ukkim Houses. The Watchdog paradigm covers the breadth of abilities needed to uncover a trail or a clue as well as how to cover it up.

Taking any abilities from the Watchdog paradigm requires being trained in Observation.

SCAN THE SCENE

10 Fortune.

Gain a +1d6 on any Observation skill Test you make when looking for clues or concealed objects.

Once per session, during a cinematic, you may use a Backup Action to make an Observation Test with a TN of 12. On a Success, increase your defenses by +1 for the remainder of the encounter.

PAPER TRAIL

10 Fortune.

Gain Reliable 3 on any Observation or Humanities Tests to find or interpret information in documents.

WATCH CLOSELY

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 on any Observation skill Test you make when observing a person or situation, as well as any Physicality Tests to avoid being noticed while you are watching someone.

RUGGED MIND

10 Fortune.

Whenever you spend Grit to reduce Animity damage, each point of Grit reduces the damage by two.

CONSULTING DETECTIVE

10 Fortune.

When you use the Side Gig Downtime Action (pg 37) you may gain a favor with one of your Relations or Factions involved in law enforcement.

GOOD LISTENER

10 Fortune.

Gain +1 to your dice pool when making any skill Test to gather information by talking to people (usually Influence or Deception).

Once per Downtime, you may spend 2 Grit to take the Interact with Relation Downtime Action (see pg 37)without using up one of your Downtime Actions.

BROWBEAT

10 Points.

When you use the threaten action (pg 45), you may choose to double the effect (both the Regard penalty and the decreased Ask).

DOGGED

10 Points.

Once per session, after failing a skill Test you may take 5 Irresistible Animity or Health damage to gain a +5 on the roll.

LINGO

10 Points.

You've picked up a few phrases from many different languages, and you're exceptionally good at reading facial expressions and body language. Whenever you attempt to understand someone who is using a language you do not know, you can understand the basic gist of what they are saying. This comprehension is surface-level; complex details and jargon will be impossible to grasp, but you get the general idea of what is being spoken about. This does not apply to understanding written text.

POLYGLOT

20 Fortune. Requires Lingo and 2 other Watchdog paradigm abilities.

Whenever you encounter a language that you do not already know, you may spend 2 Fortune to become fluent in that language. This represents the fact that you've known that language all along, but it hasn't come up yet – not a supernatural ability to instantly know a new language.

ELEMENTARY DEDUCTIONS

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Watchdog paradigm abilities.

Once per session when making an Observation Test, you can change one rolled die to a 6.

SCOUNDREL

As a matter of principle, I don't believe in any law that can't be enforced, which is why I take painstaking efforts to stay as far away from Lawjacks as possible.
—Rori Atleta, Person of Interest in 47 Burglaries, whereabouts unknown

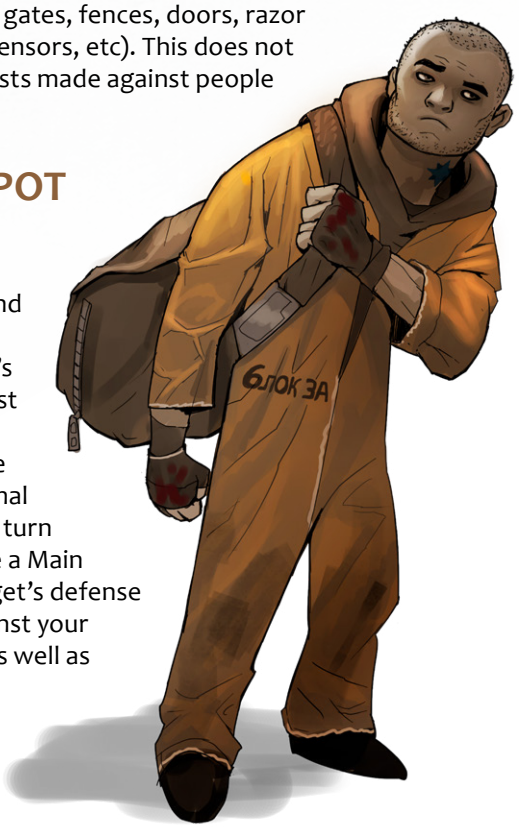
Sometimes, you don't follow the rules and end up in the underside of society. A thug, scoundrel, raconteur, or criminal can be necessary if unsavory at times. It isn't just that you break Neo Babylon's laws, but that you are willing to upset the order of whatever community you are around by taking, breaking, threatening, or weaseling your way to selfish power. Sometimes, a community needs that, and sometimes you just need a little more breaking the rules to feel better about not getting to write them yourself. Whether the Bravia inducted you to their ranks, the Ghassulian Secret Orders hold your oath, or a gang kept you safe with its own violence, you are out for yourself by using the power of these other influences.

Taking any abilities from the Scoundrel paradigm requires being trained in Deception or Physicality.

BREAKING AND ENTERING

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 to Observation or Physicality Tests made to observe or bypass any physical form of security (locks, gates, fences, doors, razor wire, security sensors, etc). This does not apply to skill Tests made against people or creatures.



SWEET SPOT

10 Fortune.

Use a Backup Action and spend 1 Grit to reduce one of a target's defenses against your actions by 3. Their defense returns to normal after your next turn ends. If you use a Main Action, the target's defense is reduced against your allies' actions as well as your own.

AMBUSH

10 Fortune.

You gain Augment 5 on all attacks against a target during the Surprise Round.

STREETWISE

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on Observation Tests to determine if someone is involved in criminal activity. When you first encounter an NPC potentially willing to engage in illegal business with you, you may spend 1 Grit to increase their Regard with you by 5.

LIGHT FINGERS

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 on all Physicality Tests for sleight of hand, pickpocketing, lock pick, or any other action to manipulate or steal something without being noticed. If a Failure or Dynamic Failure would cause you to lose Concealment, you lose only one point of Concealment.

HAMSTRING

20 Fortune.

If you score a Dynamic Success when making an attack, your target can only move by taking a Main Action for a Minor Move and may not move above Speed zero. If you score a Critical Success on an attack, your target can only move 1m for every Main Action spent moving. This effect lasts either until the target spends 5 Grit or the end of the scene or encounter (whichever happens first).

STEALTH MULE

10 Fortune.

You can hide items no larger than a pistol on your person so well that any attempts to detect them suffers a penalty of –5 and do not hinder Concealment. You may conceal up to three items in this way.

GAMBLER

10 Fortune.

Gain +1d6 for any skill Tests that are involved in gambling or games of chance. Whenever you engage in gambling Impulse or gamble as part of the Side Gig Downtime Action, gain 1d6-3 Fortune (this can be negative—take a Debt if you can't pay).

Once per session, you may gamble by spending 1d6 Grit as an Interrupt Action. You may add or subtract that amount to any roll. If you are unable to pay the Grit cost, you instead spend 1 Grit and gain no effect.

INCONSPICUOUS

10 Fortune.

Whenever your concealment (or the concealment of a group you are part of) would decrease, you may decrease the amount of concealment lost at a rate of 1 Grit per 2 concealment.

IRREPRESSIBLE

10 Fortune.

Once per session when you take Animity or Health damage, you may spend 1 Grit to reduce the damage by 2d6 to a minimum of 1 damage. You may not spend any other Grit to reduce the damage.

SLINK AWAY

10 Fortune.

You can ignore up to two Consequences for the purposes of calculating Dulled on physicality Tests to remain hidden.

SLINKING AROUND

10 Fortune.

When you use the Prepare for Trouble Downtime Action to increase a Concealment Track (see pg 37), you also gain 3 temporary Grit that can be spent on Tests and abilities related to the infiltration.

NOTHING TO LOSE

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Scoundrel paradigm abilities.

Spend 4 Grit to add +5 to any one Test after learning the result.

IMPERCEPTIBLE

30 Fortune. Requires Inconspicuous and 4 other Scoundrel paradigm abilities.

Whenever your Concealment (or the Concealment of a group you are part of) would decrease, you may decrease the amount of Concealment lost at a rate of 1 Grit per 5 Concealment. In Tests related to stealth without a Concealment track, you may negate the effects of a Success (but not a Dynamic or Critical Success) by spending 1 Grit (instead of the normal 5).

Cyber Paradigms

Cyber paradigms are the latest and greatest. The rapid influx of advanced technology has created significant upheaval and supplanted magic across many applications. While the upper echelons of society are still less likely to have adopted cyber enhancements and retained magical traditions, more and more the unique abilities that some of these enhancements provide are drawing in the wealthy and powerful, especially the young. Even as it gains prominence, cybertech is still new, and difficult for most folks to fully understand.

Cyber paradigms represent combinations of enhancements and implants that are used in tandem, connecting and working together across multiple parts of a body. All cyber paradigms require some sort of surgery for the installation of the enhancement, whose cost in stanz and recovery time is already reflected in the Fortune spent on the paradigm. Even the modest (and slowly becoming ubiquitous) datajack requires brain surgery to implement its functions.

BREACHER

There's two types of secure systems in the world, systems that don't connect to all of the world and systems that I can breach while making coffee.
—Mot Ilgi, Breacher

Breaching is the name for a set of techniques to compromise the security of cybertech devices—be they halos, implants, security systems, or Clinks. Bypassing this security requires a direct neural connection via a datajack to a specialized device known as a cyberkit.

Taking any abilities from this paradigm requires a cyberkit and being trained in the Tech skill.

EXPLOITS

Exploits are specific breacher abilities that allow a breacher to target systems within their range whose firewall they haven't breached yet. Unless otherwise specified, an Exploit requires a successful Tech Test vs Security Rating of the device targeted. If you've breached the firewall of a target, you may automatically succeed on any Exploits targeting them. Unless otherwise specified, an Exploit is a Main Action.

AGGRESSIVE HACK

10 Fortune. Interrupt.

You may spend 1 Grit to gain Augment 5 on all Breaching Tests until the end of the scene. If you do, decrease your Security Rating by 2 until the end of the scene.

BREACHWALL

10 Fortune. Exploit. Interrupt.

Spend 2 Grit to increase the Security Rating of a device within range by 5. You may do this after learning the result of a Test targeting the device to change the result of that Test.

CONTROL

10 Fortune. Exploit.

Target a drone, C-link, or other technology within your range. Roll Tech vs. target's (or owner's/controller's) Security Rating. On a Success, you give an order to the device that it will follow until the end of its next turn.

INTERVENE

10 Fortune. Exploit. Interrupt.

Spend 1 Grit. An ally may re-roll any number of dice on a failed Test.

GAG
10 Fortune. Exploit.

You interfere with the communications of a device without directly breaching it. Make a Tech Test. Any devices of your choice with a Security Rating less than your result treat their range as **T** for all actions they take until the end of the next Round. On a Dynamic Success, this lasts for the next 10 Rounds. On a Critical Success this lasts as long as the device is within 1000m of you.

FORCE SHUTDOWN
10 Fortune.

When you reduce the firewall of a device to zero, you may cause it to immediately shut down or be rendered inoperable as per the Disable Device Authorized Action (see pg 52).

TAG
10 Fortune.

You gain Augment 3 on all Tech Tests to reduce the Concealment of another device.

SCAN
10 Fortune. Exploit.

Choose a target you can see within range. The next ally to attack that target before the end of your next turn adds +2d6 to their skill Test.

GHOST IN THE SYSTEM
10 Fortune.

When you spend Grit to prevent the loss of Concealment while breaching, each point of Grit spent prevents 3 points of Concealment loss.

COORDINATE
10 Fortune. Exploit.

Target ally may spend 1 Grit to use an additional Main Action after everyone else has acted this Round.

SWIFT ACCESS
10 Fortune.

You may spend 2 Grit to use an authorized access action as a Backup Action.

OVERWATCH
10 Fortune. Exploit. Interrupt.

Spend 1 Grit. Target ally may use your Vigilance score instead of theirs until the end of your next turn. You may spend Grit to increase your Vigilance for this Exploit by 1 for each Grit spent.

SUBVERSIVE BREACH
10 Fortune.

You gain +2d6 on all Deception Tests made to falsify data.

ACQUIRE TARGET
20 Fortune. Exploit. Requires Intervene.

Choose a number of targets within line of sight equal to one plus your ranks in Tech. Until the end of the scene, whenever an Ally spends a point of Grit to re-roll a die on an attack targeting those targets, they may re-roll any number of dice.

SPOOF MESSAGE
20 Fortune. Exploit.

You send a message that appears to be from a different source. If your Tech Test beats their Security Rating, you or an ally may make a Deception Test with a +5 bonus to convince them the message is real.

HEADS UP DISPLAY
10 Fortune. Exploit.

Increase Guard for all allies within 100m by 3 for 2 Rounds.

OCULAR ASSAULT
10 Fortune. Exploit. Requires Tag.

Target a number of halos or cyber eyes equal to one plus your ranks in Tech. If your Tech Test is above the Security Rating of your targets, their users have a Consequence until the end of your next turn.

OBSCURE TARGET
10 Fortune. Exploit. Interrupt. Requires Tag.

Target one sensor or security system with the potential to detect one of your allies. If you succeed on the Exploit, you may spend 3 Grit to negate any Success (but not Dynamic or Critical Success) that would lead to you or your allies losing Concealment or otherwise being detected. Reduce the cost of this Exploit to one Grit if the targeted device is the only method for spotting your ally.

JUMPER

All of life should be like jumping—skip the boring parts and focus on the exciting parts.
—Davaga Uvagh, Jumper

Pick a vehicle in Neo Babylon, and odds are that it's being remotely controlled by a Jumper: a skilled pilot that uses cyberware to remotely operate a vehicle from afar. Most corporate vehicles (including the omnipresent taxi services, thousands of delivery vans and drones, and even many personally owned cars) rely on a combination of AI and remote monitoring, with the AI handling the drudge work and a Jumper overseeing a fleet of vehicles and jumping in if the AI seems ready to make a mistake or get in an accident (hence their name). Jumpers maintain their distributed Vigilance and the ability to quickly take control of a vehicle through dedicated cyberware that makes taking control of a vehicle they own a matter of a thought.

Taking any abilities from this paradigm requires a basic datajack and being trained in Piloting.

REMOTE MONITOR

10 Fortune.

You're accustomed to monitoring sensor feeds for signs of trouble. Gain Reliable 3 on all Observation Tests using remote sensors from a drone or vehicle.

QUICK REFLEXES

10 Fortune.

Whenever you are actively controlling a drone or vehicle you gain +2 Initiative, and reduce the Grit cost to act in a Surprise Round by one.

DEFENSIVE POSTURE

10 Fortune.

Drones and vehicles you control gain +2 Guard, and the Pursuit Track to catch you is increased by 5.

VEHICLE HOOKUP

10 Fortune.

Pick a Swag: Vehicle (see "Swag" on pg 123) Relation you have. As long as you have positive Regard with them, you may decrease your lease costs by their Power instead of the normal discount due to caste (see "Buying and Leasing Vehicles" on pg 112). If you lose or destroy the vehicle, decrease their Base Regard to you by 5.

SIGNAL SPLICER

10 Fortune.

You're an expert of finding a way to get a connection to one of your drones or vehicles, maintaining a wide range of redundant paths. You are never affected by environmental conditions that block signals unless they completely block all connections (GM discretion). Whenever a drone or vehicle that you're an Authorized User of would have its range reduced so that you can't access it (for example, through the Gag Exploit or by someone taking the Change Range Authorized Action), you may spend 1 Grit to negate that effect.

COMBAT JUMPER

10 Fortune.

You gain Augment 2 on all attacks made with a drone or vehicle.

RACER

10 Fortune.

You gain Augment 2 on all Piloting Tests made in chases (see pg 55) or as part of a race.

MACHINE EMPATHY

10 Fortune.

You have a personal understanding of how your drones and vehicles work. You gain +1d6 and Reliable 3 on any Tech Tests on a vehicle you own or have spent a Downtime Action building or repairing.

MADE FOR SPEED

10 Fortune.

When you take the Major Move (pg 33) action to exceed the maximum Speed of a vehicle you own or have spent extensive time modifying (at least one Downtime Action repairing), the increase in top Speed lasts for as long as you continue at that Speed, though you continue to take damage each Round. You gain Augment 1 on all chase Tests while above your normal top Speed.

QUICK JOCKEYING

10 Fortune.

When you take the Major Move (pg 33) action in a vehicle, you may also take the Focus action (see pg 34) as a Free Action.

BREACH SPIKES

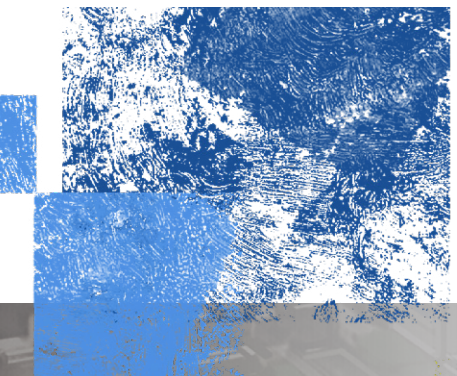
20 Fortune. Requires 3 other Jumper paradigm abilities.

Increase the Security Rating of you and all your vehicles by 2. Whenever a breacher fails an Exploit or Breaching Test targeting you or a drone or vehicle you control, they lose 3 concealment and gain an instance of Dulled on Tech Tests targeting you for the remainder of the scene.

IMPOSSIBLE STUNT

30 Fortune. Requires 6 other Jumper paradigm abilities.

You can pull off a remarkable stunt. After making a Piloting Test with a vehicle and learning its result, you may spend 5 Grit to gain a +5 on the roll. If you do so, you immediately gain another Main Action with the piloted vehicle, and it gains +5 Guard until the end of your next turn.



CYBERWARE

Props to Marduk for working with what he had, but blood and dirt really aren't the best building materials—we can do way better.
— Yklunin Kallush, Cyberware Designer

The Cyberware paradigm covers a general range of cyber enhancement and ability modifications to the body, and represents the most common types of cyberware with the broadest adoption across the general public. It is not uncommon to encounter someone in Neo Babylon with one or more of these enhancements.

Some Cybertech paradigm abilities use Enhancement Slots—space to upgrade and improve other cyberware. A character may only take as many such abilities as they have Enhancement Slots on the underlying cyberware (though some abilities increase the number of Enhancement Slots).

BASIC DATAJACK

10 Fortune.

A cybertech implant wired directly into your brain. Normally implanted on the side of the head, back of the neck, or more rarely, on the hand or arm. They are mostly used by corporate coders, but breachers need them to connect to their cyberkits.

You gain Reliable 2 with any connected halo or cyberkit, or to interact with any device you are directly connected to. Additionally, the biometric authentication you use to connect to any halos or cyberkits cannot be hacked (see "Access security" on pg 53).

FULL BODY DATAJACK

20 Fortune. Requires Basic Datajack.

You've given up pieces of yourself to upgrade that datajack with backup relays, enhancers, and boosters littered through your body. It's efficient and feels a bit more natural all the time.

Upgrade the bonus from basic datajack to Reliable 3 and gain +2 Security Rating for any of your devices connected to your datajack.

CYBERKIT

10 Fortune. Requires Basic Datajack.

A cyberkit is the tool that makes a breacher a breacher. Each cyberkit is unique, cobbled together from scavenged, stolen, or purchased parts. They interact with datajacks to make

breachers able to manipulate cybertech in various ways. No two have the same form or even functions. They are also called breach kits, breacher kits, breacher rigs, cyber rigs, cyboards, brain boards, tech decks, etc.

You gain a cyberkit with the following stats:

Security Rating 13, Firewall 10, Breach Power 5, Slicing +0. Enhancement Slots: 2

CYBERKIT EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Cyberkit.

Your cyberkit gains +2 enhancement slots.

ELITE CYBERKIT EXPANSION

20 Fortune. Requires Cyberkit Expansion

Your cyberkit gains +2 enhancement slots.

CYBERKIT ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune. Requires Cyberkit.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Each option may only be taken once, however.

Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cyberkit:

- **Improved Security:** Security Rating +2
- **Improved Firewall:** Firewall +5
- **Improved Breach Power:** Breach Power +3
- **Improved Slicing:** Slicing +1

ELITE CYBERKIT ENHANCEMENT

20 Fortune. Requires Cyberkit Enhancement.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cyberkit:

- **Elite Security:** Security Rating +2 (requires the Improved Security enhancement)
- **Elite Firewall:** Firewall +5 (requires the Improved Firewall enhancement)
- **Elite Breach Power:** Breach Power +3 (requires the Improved Breach Power enhancement)
- **Elite Slicing:** Slicing +1 (requires the Improved Slicing enhancement)

WIRED SYNAPSES

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

You may spend 1 Grit to take an additional Backup Action at the end of your turn. You may not take a Backup Action if you have already taken that Backup Action on your turn.

WIRED SYNAPSES ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune. Requires Wired Synapses.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your wired synapses:

- **Combat Synapses:** Spend 1 Grit to be Inspired on a Ranged or Melee Attack action.
- **Athlete Synapses:** Spend 1 Grit to be Inspired on a Physicality skill Test.
- **Jumper Synapses:** Spend 1 Grit to be Inspired on a Piloting skill Test.
- **Muscle Accelerator:** +1 Guard and +2 Initiative.
- **Sensory Booster:** +1 Vigilance and +2 Initiative.

WIRED SYNAPSES EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Wired Synapses.

Your wired synapses gains +2 enhancement slots.

WIRED SYNAPSES ELITE ENHANCEMENT

20 Fortune. Requires Wired Synapses.

This enhancement for Wired Synapses takes up 2 enhancement slots on your wired synapses.

You may spend 3 Grit to take an additional Main Action.

CYBERNETIC EYES

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

Gain +1d6 to Observation skill Tests where vision is relevant. You can take photos and videos using your eyes, and store a virtually unlimited amount of media files.

CYBERNETIC EYES EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Eyes

Your cybernetic eyes gain +2 enhancement slots.

CYBERNETIC EYES ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Eyes

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cybernetic eyes:

- **Enhanced Spectrum:** Low-light and thermographic vision. You never suffer

penalties to visual Observation skill Tests due to environmental or lighting conditions.

- **Eye Flare:** Once per session your eyes emit a bright flash of light. Anyone (excepting yourself) within 10m that can see you suffers one instance of Dulled until the end of your next turn.
- **Flare Compensation:** Your eyes automatically compensate for intense or sudden light. You are immune to any attack that uses bright or flashing lights to achieve its effect.
- **Microscopic Vision:** Your eyes have a microscopic vision mode, which can only be used up close (within 1 meter). Gain +2d6 to Observation skill Tests when searching for details up close, and +1d6 to Sciences skill Tests when attempting to analyze something.
- **Mini-Dart Launcher:** Each eye contains a one-shot dart launcher with a maximum range of 10m. You may load any drug or toxin into the darts. Reloading takes 5 minutes.
- **Target Assist:** If you take an Aim action before making a Ranged Attack, you also gain +1 dice pool on the attack Test.
- **Visual Threat Detection System:** +1 to Guard and Vigilance against any threat you can see.

CYBERNETIC EARS

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

Gain +1d6 to Observation skill Tests where hearing is relevant.

You can record audio using your ears, and store a virtually unlimited amount of media files.

CYBERNETIC EARS EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Ears

Your cybernetic ears gain +2 enhancement slots.

CYBERNETIC EARS ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Ears

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cybernetic ears:

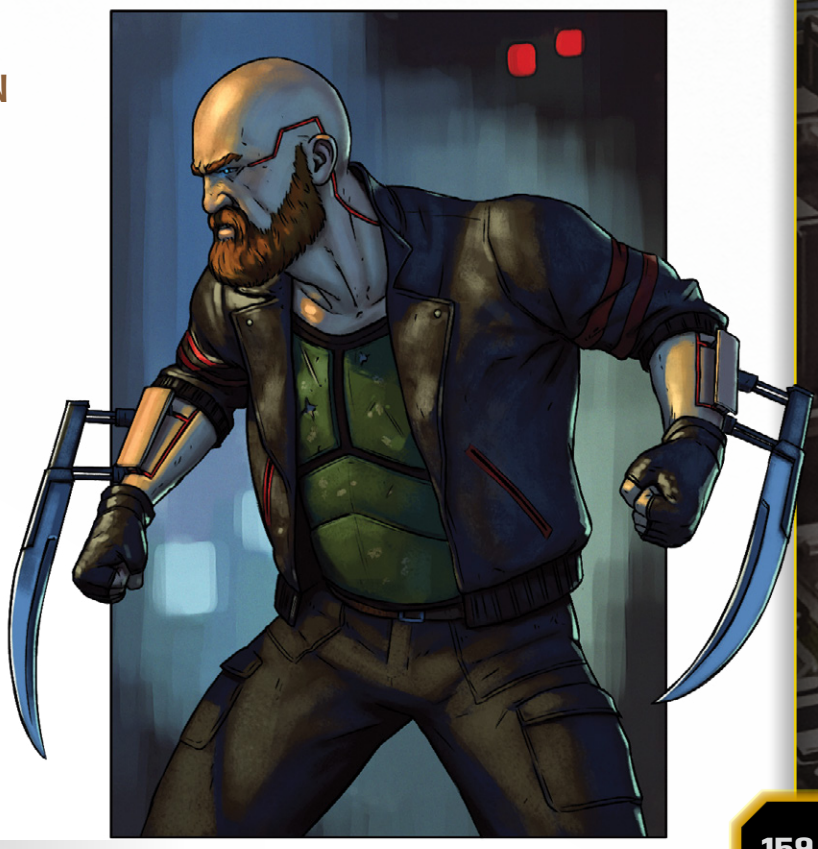
- **Auditory Threat Detection System:** +1 to Guard and Vigilance against any threat that you can hear.
- **Directional Analyzer:** With a successful auditory Observation skill Test, you can precisely tell the exact position of the source of a sound that you heard.
- **Enhanced Balance:** Once per encounter, when you would be knocked down, fall, or otherwise lose your balance, you remain on your feet and steady instead.
- **Full-Spectrum Hearing:** You are able to perceive subsonic and ultrasonic sound. You automatically detect ultrasound sensors (which include motion sensors), and you may make auditory Observation Tests to detect the presence of electronics.
- **Noise Filter:** You are able to selectively filter out background noise and other sounds that you would prefer to ignore. Once per session, you may ignore a failed auditory Observation Test, which counts as a Dynamic Success instead.
- **Protective Dampening:** Your ears protect you from harmful sound pressure. You are immune to any effect that results from loud or sudden sounds.

CYBERNETIC ARM

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

Not just a prosthetic replacement, your cyberarm is a technological marvel, and an improvement over the biological limb it replaces.

You gain Reliable 2 on all Tests primarily using your arms, and Augment 1 on all Melee Attacks and Brawn based Tests using your arms. If you have two cybernetic arms (taking this ability twice), you instead gain Augment 2 and Reliable 3 on all such Tests.



CYBERNETIC ARM EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Arm.

Your cyberarm gains +2 enhancement slots.

CYBERNETIC ARM ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Arm

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cybernetic arm. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

- **Enhanced Stabilizers:** +1d6 on Agility based Tests using your arms when you take the Focus/Aim actions (see pg 34).
- **Enhanced Brawn:** Increase the Augment from your arms by 2.
- **Cyberweapon:** Choose a one-handed weapon that is concealed within your cyberarm. Detecting the weapon requires a TN 14 Observation Test from someone looking for concealed weapons. You must spend a Backup Action to deploy or conceal your cyberweapon. You must pay the Fortune cost for the weapon in addition to the Fortune for this enhancement choice.
- **Grapple Launcher:** You may launch a grapple line at a target within 50 m as a Main Action and retract it with enough force to pull you up at your normal move Speed (taking actions to move as normal)
- **Rugged Design:** +5 Health
- **Smuggling Pod:** You can conceal an object no larger than a pistol inside a sealed compartment. Detecting the object requires a TN 15 Observation Test. Inserting or removing the concealed object requires 1 Main Action.

CYBERNETIC LEGS

20 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

Enhanced cyberlegs are always sold as a pair.

You gain Augment 2 and Reliable 3 on all actions that primarily rely on your legs (including physicality Tests in chases).

CYBERNETIC LEGS EXPANSION

10 Fortune. Requires Cybernetic Legs.

Your cyberlegs gain +2 enhancement slots.

CYBERNETIC LEGS ENHANCEMENT

10 Fortune.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cybernetic leg. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

- **Enhanced Agility:** +1d6 on Agility linked Physicality Tests related to movement, such as stealth or balance.
- **Speed:** You gain a maximum Speed of 2.
- **Enhanced Speed (Requires Speed):** You gain a maximum Speed of 3 and Acceleration 2.
- **Extendable Legs:** You are able to extend your legs to increase your height by up to 1 meter, or reduce their length to make yourself shorter. In addition to never needing a stepladder again, you also gain a +2 bonus on any skill Tests to impersonate someone by matching their height.
- **Cyberweapon:** Choose a one-handed weapon that is concealed within your cyberleg. Detecting the weapon requires a TN 14 Observation Test from someone looking for concealed weapons. You must spend a Backup Action to deploy or conceal your cyberweapon. You must pay the Fortune cost for the weapon in addition to the Fortune for this enhancement choice.
- **Mag-feet:** You can magnetize your feet, allowing you to cling to metal surfaces and objects.
- **Jump Jets:** +2d6 on Physicality Tests to jump.
- **Rugged Design:** Gain +5 Health.
- **Smuggling Pod:** You can conceal an object no larger than a pistol inside a sealed compartment. Detecting the object requires a TN 15 Observation Test. Inserting or removing the concealed object requires 1 Main Action.

CYBERTECH LUNGS

10 Fortune.

Gain +3 Health. You can hold your breath for up to one hour. You are immune to inhaled toxins.

CYBERTECH HEART

10 Fortune.

Gain +2 Health. Gain Reliable 3 on all Physicality Tests related to endurance, and you never take Health damage for running above your max Speed (see "Major Move" on pg 33).

CYBERTECH LIVER

10 Fortune.

Gain +3 Health. You are immune to all injected toxins. You may spend 3 Grit to end the effect of a drug you are under the effect of.

CYBERTECH STOMACH

10 Fortune.

Gain +3 Health. You are immune to all ingested toxins. You process food more efficiently, requiring only half as much food. You are able to go without food for 3 days before suffering any ill effects.

CYBERSKIN

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

Synthetic skin covers and protects your entire body, including (if you choose) your cybernetic limbs. Gain +2 Armor.

CYBERSKIN ENHANCEMENTS

10 Fortune. Requires Cyberskin.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cyberskin. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

- **Active Camouflage:** You must have the Appearance Control enhancement in order to take Active Camouflage. You have a low-resolution micro camera array built into your cyberskin that allows it to adapt to your background and blend into your surroundings. When you are naked or only wearing clothes with similar abilities (such as the Stealth Suit (pg 106) or Synthleather Clothing (pg 110) with the Pattern Shift enhancement), gain +2 to your dice pool on any skill Tests to hide or sneak while you are nearly naked (use the higher of this bonus or any bonus from worn gear with similar abilities).
- **Armorskin:** +3 Health and +1 Armor.
- **Appearance Control:** You can change the appearance of your skin to alter your physical appearance, including skin tone, tattoos or other markings, facial shape, and hair. You gain +2 to your dice pool on any Deception skill Tests when you are attempting to disguise yourself or impersonate someone else. This enhancement is incompatible with Armorskin.
- **Enhanced Sensory Interface:** Your cyberskin has enhanced sensory ability. In addition to improved tactile sensory ability, your skin is covered with chemoreceptors that allow you to determine the chemical composition of anything you touch. Gain +2d6 on all Observation Tests involving touch or Observation or Science Tests to determine the chemical composition of a material (including trace compounds such as drugs, poisons, or gunpowder residue). This enhancement is incompatible with Armorskin.

CYBERTAIL

10 Fortune. 2 Enhancement Slots.

A cybernetic prehensile tail. It can grab and hold things, but not perform actions with them. Gain +1 to Guard and +1d6 to any Physicality Test that involve careful balance or climbing.

CYBERTAIL ENHANCEMENTS

10 Fortune. Requires Cybertail.

You may take this paradigm multiple times. Choose one enhancement, which takes up one enhancement slot on your cybertail. Each enhancement may only be taken once.

- **Handy Tail:** At the end of your tail is a small hand. Your tail is capable of fine manipulation, not just grabbing and holding things. Once per turn you may take the Interact (pg 34) action as Free Action instead of a Backup Action. This enhancement is incompatible with Stinger or Syringe Stinger.
- **Retractable Tail:** You may extend or reduce the length of your cybertail at will, or retract it completely in order to conceal it. You may use your tail (including any enhancements) to target any object within 10m.
- **Tail Blade:** At the end of your tail is a blade, which can be retracted into a sheath in order to conceal its presence. Damage 1d6+Brawn, AP 3. This enhancement is incompatible with Handy Tail or Syringe Stinger.
- **Syringe Stinger:** At the end of your tail is a retractable stinger, designed to pierce the skin and inject a drug or toxin. By default the syringe stinger is loaded with a powerful tranquilizer. On a successful Melee Attack with the Syringe Stinger, the target must make a Physicality Test against a TN of 13. On a Failure, they take 5d6 Metabolic damage. On a Success they take 1d6 Metabolic damage and are immune to the effect of Syringe Stinger for the remainder of the scene. The damage from this enhancement is always

nonlethal. This enhancement is incompatible with Handy Tail or Tail Blade.

- **Hold-out Tail:** Your tail has a concealed single shot pistol built into it. Make a ranged attack with a range of 50m. On a Success, do 4d6 damage. This can be reloaded with 5 minutes of effort. This is incompatible with any other tail enhancement.

SUSTAINING CYBERTECH

10 Fortune.

A combination of synthetic endocrine glands, neural implants, and enhanced energy stores enable you to work for sustained periods of time without food or sleep. You may skip one night of sleep by taking 1 Irresistible Animity damage, or one day of food by taking 1 Irresistible Health damage.

If you use this during Downtime, you may take 3 Irresistible Animity damage to gain one additional Downtime Action. This may not be combined with similar effects, such as from Flow (pg 102), to gain more than 1 bonus Downtime Action.

MNEMONIC ENHANCER

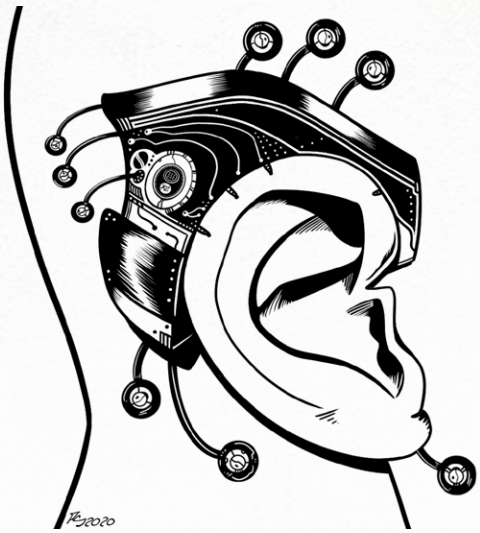
20 Fortune. Requires Datajack

You have some saved data or memories stored in cybertech so that you can access it perfectly; you can choose perfect recall of one particular memory at a time. Gain Reliable 3 on Tech, Humanities, and Science Tests.

REACTION ENHANCERS

20 Fortune. Interrupt. Requires Sustaining Cybertech

Hopped up on synthetic adrenaline, you move with a skittery speed. You can spend 1 Grit to add +2 to Guard and Vigilance until the start of your next turn.



Arcane Magic

THE SIX COLLEGES OF MAGIC

Each college of magic corresponds to a specific force in the world. The colleges are named by their ancient names, though they are now understood to correspond to forces, not entities.

By default, characters cannot harmonize mana. Upon taking an arcane paradigm choice (and every 4 after), they may harmonize 1 bar of relevant mana.

THE COLLEGE OF MANA

A mage without an understanding of mana is like a sculptor who can only see the shadow of his work.
—Arcanist Ohzurta Borash, Headmaster of the College of Mana

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. Taking any choice from this paradigm allows the PC to harmonize a maximum of one Mana Bar. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, this limit is increased by one additional Mana Bar.

AETHERLIGHT DITTY

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

You create Aetherlight, an invisible light that causes any magical effects and spirits within 10m range to glow, becoming immediately visible, even to characters not using Shinesight (see "Shine Perception" on pg 61). You can identify the nature of the magic with a TN 10 Magic Arts Test, with higher results giving more detail.

DITTY OF AEGIS

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

You make a touched target more resistant to magic, raising their Aegis by 4 until the end of the next Round.

ACCELERATED HARMONIES

10 Fortune

You may spend 3 Grit to harmonize as a Backup Action.

ANCHORED DITTIES

10 Fortune

You learn to anchor long duration effects in one place. You may roll Magic Arts vs TN 10 to spend a Downtime Action to cast a ditty with the sustainable keyword. As long as the target moves no further than 10m, the spell lasts until the end of the next Downtime. Dynamic and Critical Successes cause the spell to last for additional Downtimes. Such effects are always in high demand, and you gain +1 Fortune when you successfully use Magic Arts as part of the Side Gig Downtime Action.

DISPEL

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Mana Bar

Pick an ongoing spell within 100m. You make an opposed Magic Arts Test against the originator of the spell. On a Success, you end the spell. The opposing caster gets a +2 for each bar or point of dissonance involved in casting the spell.

Amp: For each Mana Bar you harmonize on this spell (including the base cost of the spell), you get a +3 on your roll.

ECHOING SPELL

10 Fortune.

As a Main Action, you may spend 1 Grit to recast a spell you cast the previous Round, ignoring any requirements for harmonized bars. Gain an additional instance of Dulled on any rolls to cast the spell.

ENDURING SPELL

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Mana Bar. Sustainable

This spell may be sustained as a Free Action. While this spell is sustained, the caster may sustain one other spell as a Free Action.

Amp: For each Mana Bar you spend on this Amp, you may sustain an additional spell as a Free Action.

COVERT SPELL

10 Fortune.

By default, harmonizing is obvious, as the channeled mana leaves after effects and residual energy which is clearly visible (see "Harmonize" on pg 62). You have learned the art of carefully shaping that magic in order to avoid notice. When you harmonize a Mana Bar, you leave no physical effect, instead requiring a Magic Perception Test against a TN equal to 14+your ranks in Magic Arts. You may also hide harmonizing for other bars. All of your spells gain the following Amp:

Amp: 1 Mana Bar. You hide the harmonizing while casting this spell. After harmonizing a Mana Bar, you may spend it on this Amp. All other bars harmonized for this spell leave no physical residue, and require a magic perception Test against a TN equal to 14+your ranks in Magic Arts to notice.

STORM WARDEN

10 Fortune

You've trained as a storm warden to protect settlements from tempests and mana storms (see pg 268). You may affect any tempest where you can see the affected area, as well as any tempest within 5km, regardless of if you can see it. Whenever a tempest enters that range, you gain the opportunity to immediately become aware of it with a TN 13 Magic Arts Test, gaining a bonus on this Test equal to the Power of the tempest.

You may start reducing the Power of a tempest even before finishing harmonizing your Bars—as long as you have harmonized one Bar you may attempt to quell the tempest as a Backup Action while continuing to harmonize additional Bars.

Storm wardens are always in high demand to protect communities. If you use this ability as part of the Side Gig Downtime Action, the GM does not gain Grit.

STEAL SPELL

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Mana Bars. Requires Dispel and 2 other College of Mana abilities.

Pick an ongoing spell within 100m. You make an opposed Magic Arts Test against the originator of the spell. On a Success, you gain control of the spell. The opposing caster gets a +2 for each Bar or point of Dissonance involved in casting the spell.

Amp: For each Mana Bar you harmonize on this spell, you get a +3 on your Test.

ARTIFICING

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Mana Bars. Requires Anchored Ditties and 2 other College of Mana abilities.

You can sustain spells cast by you or others to create magical items powered by pure mana. As a Downtime Action, you may create a magical item capturing the effect of any spell you can cast—optionally, you may capture the spell of another character who takes a Downtime Action with you. Pay 1 Fortune base, +1 additional Fortune for each bar or dissonance in the spell. You create a single use magical item that can be activated with a TN 12 Magic Arts Test.

Amp: 1 Mana Bar. You may make a spell with the sustainable keyword activate continuously. Once activated, this effect lasts until the beginning of the next Downtime.

MANA MASTERY

20 Fortune. 5 other College of Mana abilities.

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Mana Bar to an Amp without harmonizing for that bar.

THE COLLEGE OF FORCE (KINETIC ENERGY)

There are many learned arguments for the primacies of other energies over kinetics. I reject them all, because let's be honest, who doesn't want to fly?
—Kirsh of House Tamti, Force mage

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. A caster who takes any ability from the College of Force may now harmonize one Force Bar when casting a spell. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, the PC may harmonize one additional Force Bar.

ABSORBING DITTY

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

Gain +3 Physical Armor until the end of the next Round.

Amp: For each Force Bar used (or added), increase Physical Armor by +3.

DELICATE TOUCH

10 Fortune. Ditty.

The caster can manipulate an object of less than 5 kg (10lbs) within 50m as if they were touching it. If the object is attended, make a Magic Arts Test vs the attending character's Aegis to grab it.

FORCE FIELD

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Force Bar. Sustainable. Requires Absorbing Ditty.

The caster diminishes all physical impacts within an area. All individuals within 10m of you gain +4 Armor against Physical damage.

Amp: The caster may spend 1 Force Bar to only affect targets they choose within range

Amp: For each Force Bar spent on this Amp, increase Physical Armor by +3.

ALARM

10 Fortune. Spell. Sustainable.

You've created a web of invisible strings within 1000m of you to absorb minute amounts of kinetic energy. These spells are not enough to stop anything before being overwhelmed, but you are aware whenever they have been crossed.

If you possess the Anchored Ditties paradigm ability, you may cast this as a Downtime Action; if you do, all enemies reduce their starting Concealment by 6 when sneaking in the Community and gain an instance of Dulled on all Physicality Tests to sneak while in the Community.

FIVE FINGER FORCE FLICK

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Force Bar.

You impact a target within 50m with damaging force. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis, on a Success move the target 20m in a direction of your choice, dealing 4d6 damage to them.

Amp: For each additional Force Bar used casting this spell, do an additional 3d6 physical damage to the target.

SILENCE

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Force Bar. Sustainable.

You or a touched target makes no noise. Gain +2 on all Physicality Tests to avoid being detected in situations where hearing matters until the end of the next Round.

KINETIC WHIP

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Force Bar. Sustainable.

You use your power to levitate a long coil of flexible material around you—traditionally this spell is cast with water, though dirt, debris, or anything else malleable works as well. You can manipulate it to intercept attacks, gaining +2 Guard. When you cast or sustain this spell, you may make a Magic Arts Test against the Guard of a target in **T** range, doing 2d6 Physical damage on a Success.

Amp: For each additional Force Bar used on this Amp, increase damage by 1d6

Amp: For each additional Force Bar used on this Amp, increase Guard by an additional +2.

LEVITATE

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Force Bar. Sustainable. Requires 3 other College of Force abilities.

You or touched target weighing less than 200kg becomes weightless until the end of the next Round.

Amp: 1 Force Bar. When casting or sustaining this spell, you may move 10m for each Force Bar spent on this Amp

Amp: You may select a group of people or objects within 10m of each other to affect with this spell, with a total weight not to exceed 500kg per bar used on this Amp.

FORCE MASTERY

20 Fortune. Requires 5 other College of Force abilities.

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Force Bar to a Amp without harmonizing for that bar.

THE COLLEGE OF LIGHT

Most mages are bound by physical realities—illusionists are bound only by imagination.
—Nabua of House Elamtu, Light mage and renowned playwright

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. A caster who takes any ability from the College of Light may now harmonize one Light Bar when casting a spell. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, the PC may harmonize one additional Light Bar.

DITTY OF LIGHT

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

The caster can create a bright light of a color of their choice comparable to a bright electric light. Increase your Guard by 2 until your next turn.

DARKNESS

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Light Bar. Sustainable.

The caster shrouds a radius of up to 50m around them, providing a -4 penalty to all applicable Observation Tests and rolls targeting Guard within the area until the end of your next turn. This effect is obvious under most conditions, and your Concealment is capped at 10 when using or sustaining this spell.

TRICK OF THE LIGHT

10 Fortune. Ditty.

You may make a Divert Action (see pg 48) using Magic Arts. If you fail, decrease your Concealment by 5 (instead of being automatically discovered.

Amp: For each Light Bar added, on a Success you increase Concealment by 3, and on a Failure, reduce the decrease in your Concealment by 2.

LIGHT SHOW

10 Fortune. Spell. Requires Anchored Ditties.

You create pleasing lights around your Community that illuminate the streets and make public spaces safer. You may spend a Downtime Action to make a TN 10 Arts Test; on a Success, everyone in your Community regains 2 Animity.

NO DARK ALLEYS

10 Fortune. Spell. Requires Light Show.

It is hard to do evil in the shadows if there are fewer shadows. When you use the Downtime Action from the Light Show paradigm ability, everyone in your Community gains Adamant 2 and all Observation Tests in your Community gain Augment 1. This lasts until your next Downtime.

INVISIBILITY

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Light Bars. Sustainable.

You or a target within 50m becomes invisible until the end of the next Round. This grants a +5 on all physicality Tests to be stealthy in situations where vision is important.

LASER

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Light Bar.

The caster pinpoints a target within 50m with a ray of light. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis, on a Success, deal 4d6 damage, and all attacks against the target until the end of your next turn get +2d6.

Amp: For each additional Light Bar used casting this spell, do +2d6 damage and add an additional +1d6 on attacks against the target.

MINOR ILLUSION

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Light Bar. Sustainable.

You can create an illusion of an object no larger than 2 meters in diameter, centered at any point within 50m of you. This illusion creates no sound, heat, smell, or touch, but otherwise appears real unless the observer succeeds on an Observation Test against the Magic Arts result made when using this spell. You may relocate the spell within range whenever you sustain the spell.

Amp: 1 Light Bar. The illusion can cover an area up to 10 meters in diameter.

MAJOR ILLUSION

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Light Bar. 1 Force Bar. Sustainable. Requires Minor Illusion and 2 other abilities from the College of Light.

You can create an illusion of an object no larger than 2 meters in diameter, centered at any point within 50m of you. Unlike minor illusion, this also includes sound. The image appears real unless the observer succeeds on an Observation Test against the Magic Arts result made when using this spell. This image lasts for as long as the caster spends a Backup Action each Round maintaining the image, during which time it may change as desired by the caster. You may relocate the spell within range whenever you sustain the spell.

Amp: 1 Light Bar. The illusion can cover an area up to 10 meters in diameter.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. The illusion also includes heat.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The illusion also includes taste and smell.

Amp: 1 Force Bar. The illusion includes touch, though it cannot support more than 1 kg of weight or exert or resist a comparable force.

BLINDING FLASH

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Light Bar. Sustainable. Requires 5 other choices from the College of Light.

You create a series of blinding flashes. While sustaining this spell, you may take an Interrupt Action to roll Magic Arts vs Aegis of a target within 50m. On a Success the target gains two instances of Dulled on all Tests involving vision until the end of their turn. Any target with closed eyes gains +5 Aegis on that Test.

Amp: For each Light Bar added, you may add one additional Dulled.

LIGHT MASTERY

20 Fortune. Requires 5 other choices from the College of Light.

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Light Bar to an Amp without harmonizing for that bar.

THE ALCHEMICAL COLLEGE (CHEMICAL)

It's true, our bodies pump blood and maintain heat. Our nerves use electricity, and our eyes use light. But at its core, life is chemistry: thus Alchemy is the closest a mage can get to a magic of life.
—Professor Adara Abumar of the Alchemical College

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. A caster who takes any ability from the Alchemical College may now harmonize one Chemical Bar when casting a spell. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, the PC may harmonize one additional Chemical Bar.

SOMATIC POISON

10 Fortune. Spell. Compound. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar.

You synthesize a dangerous poison from common metabolites in people's bodies, causing harm. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis of a target within 10m. On a Success, the target takes 2d6 physical damage a turn for the next 3 turns. This damage ignores Armor.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The spell does an additional 2d6 damage a Round.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The target continues taking damage each hour after the spell effect. If the target succeeds on a physicality Test against the initial result of this spell they take no damage (but the effect continues). A Science Test of someone providing medical care may replace the physicality Test. On a Dynamic or Critical Success, the spell effect ends.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The target takes -3 guard and gains a Consequence until the spell effect ends.

PSYCHOTROPIC POISON

10 Fortune. Spell. Compound. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar.

You synthesize a poison targeting people's mind from the metabolites in their bodies. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis of a target within 10m. On a Success, the target takes 2d6 Animity damage a turn for the next 3 turns.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The spell does an additional 2d6 damage a Round.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The target continues taking damage each hour after the spell effect. If the target succeeds on a physicality Test against the initial result of this spell they take no damage (but the effect continues). A Science Test of someone providing medical care may replace the physicality Test. On a Dynamic or Critical Success, the spell effect ends.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The target takes -3 Vigilance and gains a Consequence until the spell effect ends.

DITTY OF RESTORATION

10 Fortune. Ditty.

You can fix minor physical or corrosion damage to a touched object, or make an older item appear new. Repair 3 damage to an object in **T** range. An object affected by the ditty of restoration is immune to its effect until it takes new damage—future castings can only repair damage since the last casting. A character with this ditty decreases the TN to make repairs by 5.

STABLE COMPOUNDS

10 Fortune.

As a Downtime Action, you may use the any spell with the compound keyword to synthesize 5 doses of compounds with the effect of the spell (including any amps you can add) and place them in syringes. As a Main Action, anyone with the syringe may attempt to inject the compound. Roll Melee Combat (+Agility) against the Guard of a target in **T** range. On a Success, target is injected with the compound and suffers its effects as below. If not successful, the compound is not used up. No roll is required to inject it into a willing target, additionally, you or the wielder may spend 1 Grit to inject a willing target as an Interrupt Action. Any unused compounds become inert at the beginning of the next Downtime.

PURIFY METABOLISM

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Sustainable.

You render inert any foreign chemicals in a single living target within 10m, or a collection of living creatures with a total mass of less than 100kg. Any ongoing effects due to drugs, poisons or other chemical effects on the targets end.

ARCANE METABOLISM

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Sustainable.

You use magic to power the metabolism of a single living target within 10m. The target gains 2 temporary Health and Animity (take damage from temporary Health and Animity first); and while under the effect of this spell the target does not need to breathe, eat, drink, or sleep. Relying on this spell for long periods of time is dangerous, however—for each day a target skips their basic needs while under this effect, they reduce their max Health and Animity by one. This penalty can be reset by taking a Downtime Action to recover (assuming you have access to the necessities you skipped).

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. While under the effect of the spell, the target gains Reliable 3 on all Physicality Tests.

DETERMINE COMPOSITION

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Sustainable.

You've learned to divine the chemical composition of an object by seeing how it reacts to alchemical magic. Choose an object or area within 10m no larger than 1 meter in diameter. Make a TN 8 Science Test, on a Success you know the basic chemical composition of the object or area. Higher results reveal more information about trace components or rare compounds (such as poisons or pharmaceuticals).

CORROSIVE DEFENSE

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Sustainable.

You cover yourself in a protective layer of acid, punishing anyone or anything that touches you with a splatter of acid.

Anyone who does damage to you at range T, or anyone you do damage to with a Melee Attack takes 2d6 points of chemical damage.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. Reduce all incoming chemical or poison damage by five.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. Attackers take an additional 1d6 fire damage per turn for the next 5 Rounds.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. You can choose a target in T range other than yourself as the benefit of your corrosive defense.

ARCANE REFINEMENT

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Sustainable.

You process up to 10kg of material in **T** range, removing any impurities in the material and increasing its strength. Using this spell gives +3 on any Tests to build an object.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. Objects created with this spell become extra durable, gaining 3 Armor on any attacks directly targeting them. If the target would already have 3 or more Armor normally, it instead gains +1 Armor. This does not apply to Armor an object grants to its wearer or occupants.

Amp: 1 Force Bar. You can separate trace material from a large quantity of impure material. You may target up to 1000kg of raw material, and extract up to 10kg of target material from it. If the material is not readily separable (e.g. extracting metal from ore, or wiring from a complicated device), this spell instead does 1 point of damage per Round until the target is destroyed enough to separate the material from it.

ALCHEMICAL PHARMACIST

10 Fortune. Requires Stable Compounds.

You can synthesize drugs that people need. Using a Downtime Action, you may make a Science Test vs TN 10. On a Success, everyone in the Community regains 2 Health.

You may instead use this ability to gain up to 2 Fortune worth of drugs on a successful Test (see "Drugs" on pg 102).

ACIDIFY

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar.

You turn two liters of liquid within 20m into a powerful acid. Anyone who comes in contact with it takes 6d6 acid damage and reduces their physical Armor by 3 until it is repaired.

Amp: 1 Force Bar. You spray the acid through the air. You may split the damage dice across any number of targets within 20m by making a Magic Arts Test vs the Aegis of each target (split the dice before rolling Magic Arts). Anyone who takes damage takes the Armor penalty.

Amp: For each additional Chemical Bar used on this Amp casting this spell, increase the total damage by 2d6 and reduce physical Armor by an additional 2 points.

AUGMENT FUEL

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Chemical Bars. Sustainable.

You increase the energy released from fuel, increasing it's potency. Any gun or rocket fired within 50m of you, or any fire or explosion that occurs within 50m of you, has its damage increased by 1d6. Any vehicle has its top Speed increased by one, however it takes 1 physical damage each Round this is in effect.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. You may select what sources are affected by this spell.

Amp 1 Fire Bar. Increase damage from fire and explosions by 3d6.

SYNTHESIZE STIMULANTS

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bar. Compound. Requires 3 other choices from the Alchemical College.

You can synthesize a variety of stimulants from common metabolites in people's bodies. Roll Magic Arts vs TN 12 (or Aegis if they're unwilling) of a target within 10m. On a Success, the target gains +5 initiative and +3 Guard and Vigilance for the next 5 Rounds.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The target gains Armor +1 while this spell is in effect. If this is the first time the character has been affected by this spell this Act Phase, the character heals 2d6 Health and Animity damage.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The character gains Augment 2 on all Tests while this spell is in effect.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. This spell can affect a number of targets within 10m equal to 2 plus your ranks in Magic Arts.

Amp: 1 Mana Bar. This spell becomes sustainable. The effects of this spell last for 5 Rounds after the spell stops being sustained. For every hour a character is under this effect each day (cumulative across multiple castings), they take 1d6 Health and Animity damage.

DITTY OF CORROSION

10 Fortune. Ditty.

You cause corrosion or damage to the touched target. Make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against a target in **T** range. On a Success do 2d6 damage and reduce the target's Armor by one until the next Downtime.

DISINTEGRATE

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Chemical Bars. Requires 3 other choices from the Alchemical College.

You dissolve the chemical bonds holding a piece of matter together, turning it into dust and gas. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis for a target within 10m, on a Success, you do 8d6 damage. If this reduces the target to zero Health, they gain an immediate additional Consequence. If this reduces a nonliving object to zero Health, the object is destroyed.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. For each additional bar spent on this Amp, do +3d6 damage.

ALCHEMIST'S STONE

20 Fortune. Spell. Sustainable. **Cost:** 2 Chemical Bars. Requires 3 other choices from the Alchemical College.

Successfully casting this spell requires a TN 12 Magic Arts Test. Upon casting or sustaining this spell, you can precipitate carbon from the air around you into 2 kg of graphite. This can be in any shape you desire. While this spell is sustained, this can be used to create cover, granting +3 Guard to a target of the caster's choice within 10m as an Interrupt Action. The graphite created in this way is real and nonmagical, and can be used to make structures, sculptures, or more.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. You may ignite the excess oxygen produced by this spell, creating small explosions. When casting or sustaining this spell, you may do 2d6 fire damage to a target within **T** range of the alchemist's stone you're creating. Anyone making a Melee Attack against a target you're providing cover for also takes 2d6 fire damage each time they make an attack.

Amp: 1 Force Bar. You levitate the created stone in the air, providing a more substantial block of attacks. When you use this spell to give a bonus to guard, the target also receives +2 Armor.

Amp: 1 Force Bar, 1 Fire Bar. Instead of creating graphite, you create diamond, albeit flawed. Anyone protected by this spell gains an additional +3 Guard and +4 Armor.

THE MYSTIC POULTICES

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Chemical Bars. 1 Mana Bar. Compound. Requires 3 other choices from the Alchemical College.

By tinkering with the innate magic in everything, the poultices created by this spell blend mana and chemistry to provide powerful boons. This sort of magic is dangerous, and on a Dynamic Failure this spell may draw negative attention from spirits (and sometimes even the gods). Roll Magic Arts vs TN 12 (or Aegis if they're unwilling) of a target within **T** range as you anoint them with the poultice as part of the casting. On a Success, the target gains the following effect based on their magical tradition:

- Arcane—The next harmonize action the character takes within the next 5 Rounds is a Free Action.
- Sublime—The character may immediately gain the effect of another meditation they know for the next 5 Rounds (this does not count against their limit of meditations).
- Divine—The next spell the target casts has its dissonance reduced by 1.
- No Magic Tradition—The target ignores the effect of Dulled for the next 5 Rounds. If this is the first time this act mode they have been targeted by this spell, they regain 2 Grit.

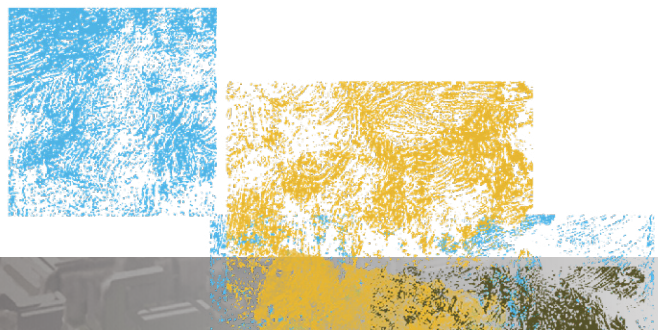
Amp: 1 Mana Bar. Instead of the normal effect, the target instead loses the ability to use magic for 5 Rounds. A character may negate this effect by spending 5 Grit.

Amp: 2 Chemical Basr, 2 Mana Bars. The effect lasts until used, or when 1 hour elapses (whichever happens first).

ALCHEMICAL MASTERY

20 Fortune. Requires 5 other choices from the Alchemical College.

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Chemical Bar to a Amp without harmonizing for that bar.



THE COLLEGE OF STORM (ELECTRICITY)

While it's theoretically true that all magic converts mana to energy with equal efficiency, the fact that cybertech, your brain, and all the mightiest gods of myth use electricity to get stuff done gives us a hint that maybe not all energy is created equal.
—Nabua of House Elamtu, Mage Electric

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. A caster who takes any ability from the College of Storm may now harmonize one Storm Bar when casting a spell. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, the PC may harmonize one additional Storm Bar.

SHOCKING DITTY

10 Fortune. Ditty.

You create a jolt of lightning at a target within 10m. If used as an attack, Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis, on a Success do 2d6 Electrical damage, ignoring Armor.

GROUNDING DITTY

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

You ground the touched target, negating any electrical charge on it and protecting it from electrical damage: gain 5 Armor against Electrical damage until the end of the next Round.

Amp: For each Storm Bar used for this Amp, you may add an additional target.

AURORA

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Storm Bar. Sustainable.

You charge the particles in the air around you, illuminating the air and its movements around you. You may use this to distract enemies and protect your allies: increase the Guard of any creature you choose within 50m by +2 as long as Aurora is sustained, and any attack relying on an electronic sensor to target them (including any remotely targeted attacks or attacks by drones or vehicles) gains one instance of Dulled. You may change the target of the spell when you sustain this spell.

Amp: You may spend 1 Storm Bar to use the aurora to overwhelm electronic devices. Any devices (including drones and vehicles) you choose take 1d6 electric damage each Round.

STATIC

10 Fortune. **Cost:** 1 Storm Bar. Sustainable.

You create electromagnetic noise that interferes with wireless communications. The range of all devices (see "Range" on pg 50) within 50m of you is reduced to 10m, and all Tests requiring wireless control whose target or originator is within 50m gain one instance of Dulled. A character may make a Tech Test opposed by your Magic Arts as a Backup Action to negate the range penalty.

Amp: For each additional Storm Bar added, you may add one additional instance of Dulled to any wireless actions. You may choose which devices are affected by this Amp.

Amp: 1 Storm Bar. You may increase the range of this spell to 100m, and the range of all devices are reduced to **T**.

BACKUP GENERATOR

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Storm Bar. Sustainable.

You provide energy to an electrical device, sustaining it and providing power. It can maintain its function indefinitely, and gains Augment 3 on all relevant Tests; however, on a Dynamic Failure it becomes inoperable.

You can spend a Downtime Action to provide power for your Community. Treat this as the Side Gig (see pg 37) Downtime Action, except the GM gains no Grit and all Downtime Actions requiring power gain Augment 3.

LIGHTNING BOLT

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Storm Bar.

Pick a target within 50m. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis; on a Success do 5d6 Electrical damage, ignoring Armor.

Amp: For each additional Storm Bar used casting this spell, target one additional target within 20m of the original target.

LIGHTNING STORM

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 2 Storm Bars. Sustainable.

Pick a target within 50m. Everyone within 10 m of target take 2d6 Electrical damage for each Round the spell is sustained as long as they remain in range.

Amp: For each additional Storm Bar used casting this spell, do +2d6 damage.

MAGNETISM

20 Fortune. **Cost:** 2 Storm Bars. Sustainable.

You create a strong magnetic field, manipulating ferrous materials on or around your target to interfere with their function.

As an interrupt while sustaining this spell, you may pick a point withing 50m. Make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against all targets withing 5m of that point. Any target that fails gains one instance of Dulled until the start of your next turn. Add an additional instance of Dulled if they are using or wearing substantial amounts of metal (this includes drones and other devices made substantially of metal).

Amp: For each Storm Bar used for this Amp, you may add an additional instance of Dulled to this spell.

Amp: Objects affected by this spell become dangerous projectiles. Everyone within 5m of the targeted point takes 1d6 physical damage for each Storm Bar used on this Amp.

SEIZURE

20 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Storm Bar. Sustainable.

You manipulate the electricity within the brain of a living creature within 10m. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis; on a Success, the target takes 1d6 Metabolic damage and cannot take any actions until the start of your next turn. Each Round you sustain this spell you may repeat this effect (rolling again). Once a creature resists the effects of this spell it cannot be affected again by this casting.

Amp: 1 Storm Bar. You may crudely control the movements of a creature under the effects of this spell. On the targets turn you may move them 10m.
Amp: 1 Storm Bar. You may target two additional creatures for each Storm Bar used for this Amp.

STORM MASTERY

20 Fortune. Requires 5 other choices from the College of Storm.

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Storm Bar to a Amp without harmonizing for that bar.

THE COLLEGE OF FIRE (THERMAL)

I'm not saying that every Fire Mage is an arsonist at heart, but every one I've met thinks it's pretty the way things burn.
— Dake Enlilyan, Fire Mage

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Arcane Affinity. A caster who takes any ability from the College of Fire may now harmonize one Fire Bar when casting a spell. For every four additional abilities taken from this paradigm, the PC may harmonize one additional Fire Bar.

WREATH OF FLAME

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

You cover a melee weapon or other held object with flames until the end of your next turn. While on fire, it does an additional 1d6 Fire damage on any attacks. If it is vulnerable to fire, it takes that damage too.

TEMPERATE DITTY

10 Fortune. Ditty. Sustainable.

You absorb excess heat from an object, spell, effect, or ability. The object is cooled to ambient temperature, and protected from heating. One target gains 5 Armor from Fire and cold damage until the end of the next Round.

Amp: For each Fire Bar used for this Amp, you may add an additional target.

HEAT SHIELD

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Fire Bar. Sustainable. Requires Temperate Ditty.

You wreathe yourself in a shield of fire, protecting you from heat. Reduce all incoming fire and cold damage by three. Anyone who does damage to you at range T takes 3d6 fire damage.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. For each Fire Bar spent on this Amp, reduce incoming fire and cold damage by an additional 5 points.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. Your unarmed attacks do 3d6 fire damage.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. For each Fire Bar spent on this Amp, increase all damage done by this spell by 1d6.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. You can choose a target in T range other than yourself as the benefit of your fire shield.

CAUTERIZE

10 Fortune. Ditty.

You may pick a target within **T** range that has taken a Consequence from being reduced to zero Health. Remove that Consequence, but the target takes 3 Irresistible Health and Animity damage.

HEARTH

10 Fortune. Spell.

You create warmth and easy availability of fire and flame for your Community. Using a Downtime Action, increase all Grit, Health, and Animity gains for members of your Community by 1 during that Downtime.

FLAME BURST

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Fire Bar.

Choose a target within 50m and roll Magic Arts vs Aegis. On a Success, deal 6d6 damage.

Amp: For each additional Fire Bar used casting this spell, do +3d6 damage

FIRE BALL

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Fire Bar. Requires Flame Burst.

Choose a point within 50 m and roll Magic Arts against the Aegis of all targets within 10m of that point (roll once against all targets). On a Success, each target takes 3d6 Fire Damage.

Amp: For each additional Fire Bar used casting this spell, do +2d6 damage.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. Only targets you choose take damage.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. You create a noxious smoke cloud with the explosion. Those who take damage also lose their next Main Action.

HOT POTATO

10 Fortune. Spell. **Cost:** 1 Fire Bar. Sustainable.

Choose an item within 50m. If attended, it resists with its owner's Aegis; otherwise treat as Aegis of 8. On a Success, anyone touching the object takes 3d6 Fire damage. Anyone who takes damage from this must immediately drop the item if possible. At GM discretion, this effect may destroy or render inoperable the chosen item.

Amp: 1 Chemical Bar. The caster can choose for an affected item to either be protected from the effects of this spell or rendered immediately inoperable until repaired.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. For each Fire Bar used on this Amp, choose two additional items within 50m.

Amp: 1 Fire Bar. For each Fire Bar used on this Amp, do an additional 1d6 damage.

FIRE MASTERY

20 Fortune. Requires 5 other abilities from the College of Fire

Free Action. Once per turn, you may spend 1 Grit to add 1 Fire Bar to an Amp without harmonizing for that bar.

Sacred Magic

THE SEVEN GODS WHO DECREE AND THEIR WORSHIPERS

The Baru religion of Neo Babylon venerates the powers known as the Seven Gods Who Decree. While each of these Seven represent an ideal or domain that makes civilization in Neo Babylon possible, the mantles, both the garments and the symbolic ideals, represent priestly orders, not boxes for the gods to fit into. The seven are known in various places by different names or even by the ideas they represent, but the Powers do not mind. Every faithful person finds them however they must, and the Powers remain gods whether mortals get their names right or not. Each sacred Mantle represents being in tune with a particular deity or power, and by extension, a domain over which that divine being exerts control and blessing.

Upon becoming trained in Magic Arts, a character may allow themselves to be chosen by a particular Power (see "Choosing a God" on pg 67). The paradigm options available to them depend on the Power they follow. A character may choose an additional mantle allowed by their Power when they reach Magic Arts ranks 3 and 6. Characters may not select any sacred paradigms if they have taken abilities from an Arcane or Sublime paradigm.

Mantle	Related Powers
Authority	**Marduk**, Ishtar
Passion	**Ishtar**, Nabu, Shamash
Knowledge	**Nabu**, Shamash, Enlil (Disgraced, Forbidden)
Justice	**Shamash**, Marduk, Ninurta
Secrets	**Sayin**, Nabu, Nergal
Death	**Nergal**, Ishtar, Ninurta , Enlil (Disgraced, Forbidden)
Cultivation	**Ninurta**, Marduk. Sayin
Nature	**Enlil** (Disgraced, Forbidden), Sayin, Nergal

MANTLE OF AUTHORITY

Strong laws enable trust among the untrustworthy.
Great Leaders enable wisdom among the fools.
— Hammurabi Enlima, Baru of Marduk

Often associated with Marduk, the Mantle of Authority is, at its worst, the favorite of Tyrants. At its best, however, it is the domain of inspiring leaders who help others toward a common purpose. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

VOICE OF ASSURANCE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You speak an assuring suggestion to a target within 10m. Decrease the value of any Ask you make to the target by 3. If they do what you suggest, any skill Tests they make before your next turn towards your suggestion gain +1 dice and are Inspired. If they reject your suggestion, both you and the target take 2 Animity damage.

INCANTATION OF COMMAND

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You exert your sacred power over a haunt, spirit, or demon within 10m. Reduce their Aegis by 5 until the end of your next turn.

GRANT AUTHORITY

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Interrupt.

You impart authority to someone else within 50m. Spend 1 Grit to give the target +2 dice on all Influence Tests and +2 on all defenses for 10 minutes, or until you cast another spell or make an Influence Test. While this effect is active, you may choose to allow them to spend your Grit as if it was their own.

OATH

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 4.

You bind one or more willing parties within 10m (which can include yourself) to a specific Oath. Each participant spends an agreed upon amount of Grit (this is the same for all participants). For each point of Grit spent by any participant, gain a pool of Grit that can be spent by any member of the group in any situation to uphold the oath or prevent the oath from being broken. Any participant can refill the Grit pool by spending Grit. If any participant breaks the oath, the oath-breaker immediately takes a number of dice of Animity damage equal to the amount of Grit each participant spent, and the effect ends for all participants.

STEWARD

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

Pick any number of targets within 50m. You gain Inspired and Reliable 3 on any action made to assist them for the next five Rounds. For the next 24 hours, if you take any action against them or intentionally allow them to come to harm, you take 3d6 Animity damage.

NATURAL LEADER

20 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Authority.

Make a Magic Arts Test against TN 10. On a Success, all allies (not including you) within 50m gain +1d6 on all skill Tests and +1 defenses until the beginning of your next turn, and you gain +1 dice on Influence Tests. You or any target may spend any amount of Grit; for each Grit spent increase the duration by 1 Round.

PROCLAIM LAW

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Authority.

Pick one of your Values and state an edict upholding it. Make a Magic Arts Test vs Aegis for anyone who hears your edict within 50m. On a Success, they take 4d6 Animity damage the first time they violate the edict within the next day.

MANTLE OF CULTIVATION

A seed planted today is a meal tomorrow, a sapling planted by the parent is shelter for the child
— Apson Belyan, Baru of Ninurta

Chosen of Ninurta tend to favor the Mantle of Cultivation, which focuses on creating growth and stability, both literally with plants and agriculture and figuratively with Health, strength and community. This mantle also values the development of robust and prosperous communities and civilization. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

GROW PLANTS

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You cause plants of your choice within 100m range to grow at ten times their normal rate. Fruit and Vegetable plants produce an abundance of food. If you use this ability and make a Magic Arts Test as part of the Side Gig (pg 37) Downtime Action, you gain 1 additional Fortune.

If you have the Community Garden (pg 137) resource, you may use a Downtime Action to decrease the cost of lifestyle maintenance for everyone in your Community by 1 and decrease the GM's Grit by 2.

VERDANT BOON

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You endow an ally with strength and resilience. They gain 2 Armor and 2 Adamant until the end of the scene. Any character may only be under the effect of one instance of Verdant Boon at a time.

Special: You may cast this spell as a Downtime Action. If you do so, any member of your Community who takes a Downtime Action with you gains 4 Armor and 4 Adamant until the start of the next Downtime.

GROW STRONG

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You imbue an ally within 10m range with vigor and ability. They gain +1d6 on all Tests linked to Brawn or Agility until the end of your next turn, and gain Augment 1 on all such Tests. You or they may spend one Grit to extend the duration of the spell by one Round (this may be done multiple times).

NURTURE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You heal and strengthen a target within 10m. They heal 4 Health. A character may only benefit from the nurture spell once between the end of each Downtime.

Special: You may cast this spell as a Downtime Action. If you do so, any member of your Community may take a Downtime Action with you to heal 8 Health damage. If this would bring a character to full Health, they increase their max Health by the remainder until the end of the next Downtime.

GROW THE COMMUNITY

10 Fortune.

You may take a Downtime Action to reduce the cost of one Community paradigm ability by the number of abilities you have in this paradigm (this can reduce the cost to a minimum of one Fortune). If you do so, regain 1 Animity and Grit.

PEACE AND CALM

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You provide the mental space necessary for a character to thrive and grow. They heal 4 Animity damage. A character may only benefit from the Peace and Calm spell once between the end of each Downtime.

Special: You may cast this spell as a Downtime Action. If you do so, any member of your Community may take a Downtime Action with you to heal 8 Animity damage. If this would bring a character to full Animity, they increase their max Animity by the remainder until the end of the next Downtime. Additionally, the GM must spend 5 more Grit to activate a Community Impulse until the end of the next Downtime.

RING OF RESCUE

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Interrupt.

Make a Magic Arts Test. Any allies within 10m may use the result of your roll instead of their guard until the end of your next turn. You or any target may spend any amount of Grit; for each Grit spent increase the duration by 1 Round.

TIRELESS CULTIVATOR

20 Fortune. Requires Nurture, Peace and Calm, and 1 other ability from the Mantle of Cultivation.

When you use the Nurture or Peace and Calm spells, you may increase the dissonance by 1 to target a character who has already been targeted by those effects a second time (they may not be targeted by the ability a third time).

VIGOROUS STEWARD

30 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 2. Requires 6 abilities from the Mantle of Cultivation.

You may use this ability to target a character who has taken a Downtime Action to gain the benefits of your abilities from this paradigm. Spend any amount of Grit. For each point of Grit spent, increase their Guard, Vigilance, and Aegis by 2 until the beginning of their next turn. This may be done after learning the result of a Test targeting them—apply this spell before resolving that effect.

When the GM spends Grit to trigger a Community Impulse, the player may immediately spend any amount of Grit. The GM must spend Grit equal to twice the amount of Grit spent or the Impulse is not triggered.

MANTLE OF DEATH

You command the storm which flattens the hostile land, you pour dust over its evil, you pour it over for as long as it disobeys. Because thou art kind, I have turned to thy divinity. Because thou art forgiving, I have sought for thee. Look with true favor upon me and hearken to my cry. May thy angry heart be at rest!

—Ancient Prayer to Nergal

Most common among chosen of Nergal, the Mantle of Death focuses on bringing death and destruction, both directly but also by empowering others in violence and combat. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

FRAILTY OF LIFE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2.

You pull an injured target closer to death. Choose a target within 10m. On a successful Magic Arts vs Aegis Test, they take damage equal to the current amount of damage they've taken.

KILLER'S EYE

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

You make a blow land with extra impact. After witnessing a successful attack within 100m, you may cast this spell to give it Augment 5.

HARDENED

10 Fortune.

Your intimacy with the domain of death has desensitized you to experiences others might find disturbing. Gain Adamant 2.

CHAMPION OF WAR

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

A target you can see within 50m gains +2 Guard and Augment 2 on all Melee and Ranged Combat Tests for 3 Rounds.

IMBUE PROWESS

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

You call upon sacred power to imbue a target with skill. The target may use your ranks in Magic Arts instead of Ranged or Melee Combat skills Tests for their next three turns.

MORTALITY'S CHAINS

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You target a spirit, elemental, undead, or construct within 50m. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis of the target; on a Success the target takes 6d6 Physical Damage and 2d6 Animity Damage.

ACCIDENTAL HARM

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

You call on your power to will the universe to become more hazardous to a target. Make a Magic Arts vs Aegis of a target you can see within 50m. On a Success, the next time within the next day they are in a hazardous situation where they might take damage or get a Dynamic Failure on a Test that could conceivably lead to harm, they take 3d6 Physical damage in addition to the normal effects.

FAMINE

20 Fortune. Spell. Downtime Action. Dissonance 5. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Death.

You call misFortune down on a target. As a Downtime Action, you may target a character. Make a Magic Arts Test against their Aegis (if an individual) or against a TN equal to Power x2 +12 (for

a Faction or Community). On a Success, the target gains a Consequence until the next Downtime.

Whenever a PC uses this ability, the GM gains 10 Grit.

CONTEST OF MARTIAL SKILL

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Death.

You will combatants around you to a contest of skill. Make a Magic Arts Test against the Aegis of all targets within 50m (willing targets may choose to be automatically affected by this spell). All affected targets take a -5 penalty to their Guard. Whenever a character affected by this spell makes a Melee or Ranged Combat Test, that result becomes their Guard until the beginning of their next turn.

PESTILENCE

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Death.

You inflict a supernatural disease upon a target within **T** range on a successful Magic Arts vs Aegis Test. The target gains an immediate Consequence, and each Round must make a Physicality Test opposed by your Magic Arts skill. On a Failure they take 2d6 damage, on a Success they take no further damage for now (on a Dynamic or Critical Success, the spell immediately ends, removing the Consequence from this spell).

At the end of each Downtime, an affected target must make a Physicality Test vs your Magic Arts Skill as above. If they took the Recover action during Downtime they gain a +5 on this Test, if someone took the provide care action on their behalf they may replace the Physicality Test with a Science or Magic Arts Test. On a Dynamic Failure, this spell passes on to someone else the target had close contact with (GM's decision)—they are treated as if they were targeted by this spell in an identical matter to the original target.

Whenever a PC uses this ability, the GM gains 10 Grit.

PAROLE DEATH

30 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 4. Requires 6 other abilities from the Mantle of Death.

You allow an injured target within 50m range to continue onward even in the face of extreme injury. Target gains 1 Health and loses the **Unconscious** condition if it has it, and gains a Parole Death Progress Track starting at the current amount of damage they've taken to their Health track and with a max value equal to twice their normal max Health. Any further damage the target takes is applied to the Parole Death track before it is applied to Health or Grit, up until the max value is reached. This track lasts as long as its value is greater than zero. A character may not be targeted by the Parole Death spell if they are already under the effect of another casting of the spell.

At the end of each subsequent Downtime, the character takes damage equal to the value of their parole death track (this does not add to their parole death track). A character with this spell may take a Downtime Action to make a Magic Arts Test to decrease the value of the Progress Track. Once the Progress Track is reduced to zero (or the target dies), the spell ends.

MANTLE OF PASSION

"But the greatest gift to the seven lines of kingu was from Ishtar, who gave them passion. For without passion, none would aspire to use their other gifts, and indeed without her gift the lineages would not be able to worship any of the other gods—and for her gift she was given the highest of reverence"
— Harmaku's Aubade of Praises

Passion is most often, though not exclusively the domain of Ishtar. The Mantle of Passion focuses on supporting and enabling people to follow their values and build deep relationships. It can also empower impulsivity and pleasure. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

DIVINE DESIRE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis on a target you are engaged in conversation with. On a Success, you learn the Value, Impulse, goal, or positive Relation that is most salient to them at the moment. (Note, Asks that are lined up with the Values, Impulses, and Goals of a target become easier (see "Asks" on pg 44)).

ENTICE DESIRE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You convince a target to do something related to one of their wants or desires (even if it conflicts with other goals or Values). Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis on a target within 50m. On a Success, decrease the **Ask** of any request that advances one of their Values, Impulses, goals, or positive relationships by 6.

FILL LIFE WITH PASSION

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

Choose a target within 10m (including yourself) that has taken an action to advance an Impulse, Value, goal, or Relation with a Regard greater than 5. They gain 2 Grit and 2 Animity. This may only be done once per character per session.

LOVE AND KINDNESS

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Interrupt.

Once per session per Relation, upon meeting a Relation with a Regard greater than 5, you regain 3 Animity.

MANY FRIENDS

10 Fortune.

You gain 1 Fortune for every Relation you have with a Regard of ten or higher. This applies to your current Relations as well as any new Relations (you do not lose this Fortune if the Base Regard drops, however you do not gain it again if you raise their Regard back up). Whenever you take the Interact with Relation Downtime Action (see pg 37), gain 1 Grit.

FOLLOW PASSION

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

Spend 1 Grit to choose a target within 10m (including yourself) that has taken an action to advance an Impulse, Value, goal, or Relation with a Regard greater than 5. The target gains +2 dice on any Tests involved in that action and the roll becomes Inspired.

LOVE IS LIFE

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Passion.

Gain 2 Additional Values and +2 Max Grit.

BOND OF LOVE

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Passion.

Choose a target within **T** range with a Regard towards the caster of 8 or higher, or a willing PC who both players agree is a good friend or better. Until the next Downtime, either character may spend Grit from each other's pools. When the characters make a teamwork or Group Test together, roll one additional dice and the roll is Inspired.

DARKNESS CANNOT DIM A LIGHT

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Passion.

If you have not broken any of your Values, target within 50m gains Adamant 5 until the start of your next turn. If you target yourself, instead gain Adamant 10.

PURPOSE

30 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Interrupt. Requires 6 other abilities from the Mantle of Passion.

You may cast this spell upon accomplishing a major goal (GM discretion), upholding a Value at cost to yourself, or improving the Regard of a Relation above 5. Gain 3 Grit and remove a Consequence.

MANTLE OF JUSTICE

Neither mercy that lets a wound fester nor punishment that leaves a greater mark is justice, for justice must always be a balm to the world.
— Dakuri of the Esteemed House Maadasi, Arbiter of Shamash

Both Ninurta and Shamash, in their various roles as Powers of Justice, have many of their chosen bear the Mantle of Justice. It focuses on upholding justice, ascertaining guilt, enacting punishment, and providing recompense to victims. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

ILLUMINATE GUILT

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis on a target within 10m. On a Success, you ascertain if they believe they have engaged in violations of the law or their Community's Values recently. As this spell depends on the internal beliefs of the target it is considered unreliable except as a guide for future investigations—some people hold more guilt for being accidentally rude to a friend than others do for robbing a bank!

ENACT SENTENCE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 5.

Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis on a target within **T** range who you believe beyond a reasonable doubt has violated one of your Values. They gain 1 Consequence until they meet a condition you specify (typically restitution or a specific duration). This effect lasts for 1 week, however for each Grit you spend, you may increase the duration by 1 month. If you spend 10 Grit, this effect is instead permanent.

VICTIM'S BLESSING

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3.

Spend 2 Grit and choose a target within **T** range you believe has been a victim of a violation of one of your Values. They heal 5 Health and 5 Animity damage. A character may only benefit from Victim's Blessing once between the end of each Downtime.

STUDENT OF MORALITY

10 Fortune.

Gain 2 additional Values. The first time you uphold a Value at cost to yourself each session, heal 3 Animity damage (this applies separately for each Value).

RESPECTED ARBITER

10 Fortune.

You help resolve issues in your Community. As long as your Community's Regard towards you is 4 or higher, the GM must spend an additional 2 Grit to trigger a Community Impulse. Furthermore, you remove 3 GM Grit instead of 2 whenever you take the Deal with a Problem Downtime Action.

COMPEL TRUTH

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Interrupt. Requires 3 other abilities from Mantle of Justice.

Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis on a target within 10m. On a Success they may not lie for 1 minute, though they may attempt to misdirect you at a penalty (they take a -5 penalty on any Deception Tests). On a Dynamic Success, they may not attempt to misdirect you; on a Critical Success they may not lie by omission and will blurt out the truth in response to questions.

HIDDEN SUN OF THE GUILTY

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Requires 3 other abilities from Mantle of Justice.

You create a blinding light source visible only to those who have violated your beliefs. Choose one of your Values. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis for all targets within 50m. If you beat their Aegis and they have violated that Value, they take 2d6 Health and Animity damage. For minor infractions, halve the damage; for major infractions, double the damage. You may make an Observation Test vs Vigilance against anyone affected by this spell—they take a penalty on their Vigilance equal to half the damage taken. On a Success, you identify them as having been affected by this spell.

PATH TO ABSOLUTION

30 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 5. Requires 6 other abilities from Mantle of Justice.

You touch a willing target who has violated one of your Values. Roll Magic Arts vs TN 10; on a Success, they receive visions of their violation (depending on the Value, this may be images of the harm they've inflicted, the beliefs of the community, or simply an overwhelming sense that the Value should be observed). The target takes 4d6 Animity damage and gains the Value as one of their own. Any session they work towards providing restitution towards their violation, they heal 5 Animity damage and gain 3 Grit. If they violate that Value, they immediately take 4d6 Animity damage. This effect lasts until they have made full restitution to their violation or for one year, whichever happens first.

MANTLE OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is the root of all wisdom, and much foolishness.
— Lilitu Maryan, Baru of Nabu

The chosen of Nabu often take on the Mantle of Knowledge, but it is also a favorite of Shamash's disciples. It focus on learning, understanding, and divinations and wards against threats. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

KNOW THE LANGUAGES OF EARTH

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

Choose a target within **T** range. For 1 hour, or as long as they are within 50m of you (whichever is longer), you understand all languages they speak, and they understand all languages you speak.

SNATCH THE MYSTERIES

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 4.

A favorite of Chosen attempting to quickly study up on a subject, the Chosen touches an object and attempts to learn its secrets. Make a Magic Arts Test against a TN of 10. On a Success, treat the Chosen as if they had carefully studied the object for a number of hours equal to their margin of Success (minimum 1).

SACRED HEDGE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You know the dangers of mystical effects and how to protect against them. Roll against target caster's Aegis (or effect TN). On a Success, increase the Aegis of all allies within 50m by 3 against that magical effect. This lasts until the end of the scene.

KNOW WEAKNESSES

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2.

Choose a target within 50m of you. Make a Magic Arts Test against their Aegis defense; if you succeed you and all allies within 50m get +1 dice on all effects targeting them for the next 10 minutes.

KNOW WAYS

10 Fortune. Interrupt. Spell. Dissonance 1.

Choose a target within 50m of you. Make a Magic Arts Test against their Aegis defense; if you succeed you and all allies within 50m get +2 Aegis, Guard, and Vigilance against any effects they initiate until the end of your next turn.

DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE

10 Fortune.

You become inured to even the most disturbing knowledge. You gain Adamant 10 against any Animity damage due to learning uncomfortable facts, exposure to alien forces, or other sources of damage based purely on learning something. This does not apply when it directly affects you—learning about a terrifying creature is one thing; seeing a terrifying creature about to attack you is completely different!

KNOW MIND

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Knowledge.

Choose a target within 10m. On a successful Magic Arts vs Aegis Test, you hear their surface thoughts in your head for as long as you take no other actions besides attuning. On a Dynamic Success, you also know any memories they have of the last day. On a Critical Success, you gain access to any of their memories.

KNOWLEDGE

20 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Knowledge.

Cast upon failing a Science or Humanities Test to know something. You may spend 1 Grit to immediately re-roll, gaining a bonus equal to half your ranks in Magic Arts (round up).

SEEK ANSWER

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Knowledge.

You look for knowledge. State a simple question that you do not know the answer to and make a Magic Arts Test vs TN 10. If you succeed, you learn of the existence and the location of any object within 100m that could help answer your question. If the question could be answered by a person within 100m, compare your result to their Aegis. If your roll beat their Aegis, you learn of their existence and location.

DIVINATION

30 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance X (see description). Requires 6 other abilities from the Mantle of Knowledge.

You pour oil onto water, inspect bones or livers, read the moon, or some other method of interpreting portents as you seek to gain insight into a question.

Ask a question of the GM and choose an Insight value up to your ranks in Magic Arts (minimum zero). The GM will then choose an insight value for the information you're seeking. Higher insight values provide more information or uncover more hidden knowledge. Low insight values correspond to more easily findable information.

Make a Magic Arts Test with the TN equal to 12 plus the insight value you chose. On a Failure, you receive no answer. On a Success, note whether the GM's insight value or your insight value is higher.

If the Insight value you chose is higher than the Insight value chosen by the GM, you have interpreted the elements correctly and the GM answers the question truthfully, though not always in a way that feels immediately useful.

If your insight value is lower than the Insight value chosen by the GM, the GM provides a cryptic clue towards the answer—the larger the gap between your insight value and the GM's insight value, the more obscure the clue.

On a Dynamic Success, decrease the GM's insight value by 2— on a Critical Success instead decrease the GM's insight value by 4.

The dissonance of this spell is equal to 3 plus the insight value chosen by the caster. In addition, the Attune action may not be used to mitigate any dissonance from this spell, though Grit damage is reduced by the Dangerous Knowledge ability (this is an exception to the normal rule that Adamant cannot affect Irresistible damage). On a Dynamic Failure you, take twice the Animity damage from the spell.

MANTLE OF NATURE

The more one listens, the more one realizes the folly of thinking we are apart from nature. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we stand on are all a part of the natural world. We can no more separate ourselves from nature than an island can separate itself from the earth.
— Davaga Uvagh, Naturalist

The mantle of nature covers the domain of the natural world, apart from the restraints of civilization. While both Sayin and Nergal have small factions who follow this mantle, it is often marginalized. Still, followers of the disgraced god Enlil most often chose this mantle. The mantle of nature allows chosen to interact with these devastating elements, but also animals and natural phenomenon. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

SONGS OF NATURE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

You intuitively understand communication of non-sapient natural beings. You may ask simple questions, limited to the understanding of the being (a parakitty might know when its owner was last around, while moss is limited to know if its been stepped on recently). You may use Influence and Deception against non-sapient natural beings. You do not need to take the Attune action to resolve the dissonance of this spell until you take an action other than communicate with the natural world.

PRIMAL INSTINCT

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You gain a sudden hunch about a physical or environmental danger to yourself and how to avoid it. If used in a cinematic, gain +4 defense against an attack (this may be used after your opponent rolls).

THE WAY OF THINGS

10 Fortune.

Communing with the natural world has taught you many things. Among them is that life is brief, but even the end of life nourishes life in the future. These thoughts put you at ease with concepts others find troubling. Gain Adamant 2.

DOWSING

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2.

You attempt to find a natural object or material of relevance to a non-sapient natural being (examples include food, water, shelter, or other living beings). Make a Magic Arts Test to determine the range of this effect—the result determines the range in kilometers that the object or material can be found.

SENSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You gain an intuitive understanding of the ecosystem surrounding you. Gain +2 dice on any Science Tests to answer questions about life around you, or Piloting Tests to navigate the terrain. This ability does not work in non-natural areas.

DANGEROUS LANDS HEAR THE CALL

10 Fortune. Spell. Interrupt. Dissonance 1.

You channel a natural danger against an opponent. Roll Magic Arts against the Aegis of a target within 100m and do damage based on the pre-existing danger in the situation.

- None (e.g. idyllic peaceful field). Do 1 point of damage as a mild wind blows an object into them, or they twist their ankle on uneven ground.
- Mild (e.g. a wild forest or mild storm). Do 1d6 damage as ground gives, objects fall, or they are buffeted by a gust of wind.
- Moderate (e.g. craggy mountains, a large thunderstorm). Do 3d6 damage as lighting strikes, rocks fall, etc.
- Severe (e.g. a hurricane, a dangerous old growth forest, extreme temperatures). Do 6d6 damage.

At the GM's discretion, other hazards may occur instead of direct damage (aggressive animals, falling down holes, being shoved or trapped).

GATHER NATURE'S DANGERS

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Nature.

You increase the natural hazards within 100m of you for 5 Rounds, up to a maximum of Moderate. Use the following scale:

- None (e.g. idyllic peaceful field). No effect.
- Mild (e.g. a wild forest or mild storm). Apply a -1 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.
- Moderate (e.g. craggy mountains, a large thunderstorm). Apply a -3 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.
- Severe (e.g. a hurricane, a dangerous old growth forest, extreme temperatures). Apply a -5 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.

SCATTER NATURE'S DANGERS

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 2. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Nature.

You decrease the risk of natural hazards within 100m around you for 5 Rounds. Decrease the hazards of nature around you by one step on the following scale.

- None (e.g. idyllic peaceful field). No effect.
- Mild (e.g. a wild forest or mild storm). Apply a -1 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.
- Moderate (e.g. craggy mountains, a large thunderstorm). Apply a -3 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.
- Severe (e.g. a hurricane, a dangerous old growth forest, extreme temperatures). Apply a -5 penalty on all relevant Tests in the area.

INCITE BEAST

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Nature.

You drive a non-sapient natural animal within 10m into an aggressive rage against a target within 100m. Make an immediate Magic Arts vs Aegis of the animal in question. If the animal is domesticated, the owner may instead make a Piloting Test instead of Aegis. On a Success, the animal becomes hostile against the target and attempts to attack them. On a Dynamic Success, the animal gains +2 dice on any attacks; on a Critical Success the caster additionally can control the actions of the animal. This effect lasts until the end of the scene.

SOOTHE BEAST

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Nature.

You drive a non-sentient natural animal within 10m to act peacefully. Make an immediate Magic Arts vs Aegis of the animal in question. If the animal is domesticated, the owner may instead make a Piloting Test instead of Aegis. On a Success, it becomes docile and is treated as having a Regard of 5 to all targets within 100m. If the animal already has a positive Regard to you, increase its Regard to you by 5. This effect lasts for 1 hour.

MANTLE OF SECRETS

Knowledge shapes what we believe and who we are. What others believe of us can bind us, what we believe of ourselves can damn us. Secrets shield us from the truth, so that we can make a better one.

—A scrap found in the library of Sayin, Author Unknown.

Most popular among chosen of Sayin, chosen of Nabu also favor the Mantle of Secrets, which focuses on obfuscation, memories, and the finding of forgotten knowledge. Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts, selecting Sacred Affinity, and selecting an appropriate power.

WITNESS FORGOTTEN KNOWLEDGE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Interrupt.

Upon witnessing the loss of knowledge (whether it be through the destruction of a book or device or the death of a being), you may cast this spell. Make a Magic Arts Test against TN 10 for inanimate objects, or the Aegis of the dying being. On a Success, you learn any secrets about to be lost as if you had spent an hour inspecting or honestly conversing with the subject.

This spell only works on information about to be irrevocably lost—knowledge of which there is a copy or known by someone else cannot be learned by this spell.

ELUDE NOTICE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You twist attention away from you or another. Make a Magic Arts Test vs Vigilance of a character who you recently lost concealment to. On a Success, increase your Concealment to them by 2.

FORGET

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1.

Pick a target within 10m (you are a valid target). If you are targeting an unwilling target, roll Magic Arts vs Aegis; otherwise roll vs TN 10. On a Success, you erase all memories of 1 hour of time, or an equivalent amount of facts or knowledge. These memories are inaccessible for 2d6 days. On a Dynamic or Critical Success, you may spend 5 Grit to cause the memories to be permanently erased.

UNREMARKABLE FACE

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3.

You cover yourself with a glamour that draws attention away from yourself and makes you harder to recognize. You gain Resistance 2 against all reductions of concealment in social situations. The glamour persists indefinitely as long as you remain in a group. If you draw individual Concealment to yourself (e.g. attempting to get past a guarded checkpoint alone or by jumping up on a table and dancing), roll Magic Arts vs the highest Vigilance observing you. On a Success the glamour persists and you remain unrecognizable (though they may still react to you); on a Failure the spell ends immediately.

HUNTER IN THE DARK

10 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt.

You may cast this spell in conjunction with an attack (yours or another's) against a target within 100m. Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis—on a Success, reduce their Guard and Aegis by 5 until the start of their next turn.

SEEK ANSWER

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 3. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Secrets.

You look for knowledge. State a simple question that you do not know the answer to and make a Magic Arts Test vs TN 10. If you succeed, you learn of the existence and the location of any object within 100m that could answer your question. If the question could be answered by a person within 100m range, compare your result to their Aegis. If your roll beats their Aegis, you learn of their existence and location.

MISDIRECT

20 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt. Requires 3 other abilities from the Mantle of Secrets.

You gain Reliable 3 and Inspired on a Deception Test you make in conjunction with this spell.

FADE TO ANONYMITY

30 Fortune. Spell. Dissonance 10. Interrupt. Requires 6 other abilities from the Mantle of Secrets.

You will the world to ignore you. Gain 3 concealment on any ongoing concealment track, and move all Current Regard towards you 2 points towards zero.

Sublime Magic

Yojin would be the first to tell you that the Five Yojin Ways are not based on scientific elements. A Yojin's fire may burn like nature's fire, but it isn't the same substance. Yojin masters practice elemental ways as a martial artist might practice forms based on animals. Rather than being empowered by elements themselves, the Yojin bend themselves to emulate the power they find in the elements. The Yojin doesn't borrow an element; they become it.

Each character may only select abilities from one Sublime paradigm.

WAY OF EARTH

Stand atop a peak and you'll understand a mountain in that instant. Stand there for a lifetime and you'll know what an instant is to a mountain.
—Earth Yojin Teaching.

The Way of Earth embodies the toughness of the ground, becoming resistant not just to physical damage but mental harms as well.

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sublime Affinity.

A Way of Earth Yojin may have 1 meditation active if they have taken any abilities from this paradigm.

For each additional 4 abilities from this paradigm, they may have an additional meditation active simultaneously (see "Casting Sublime Magic" on pg 67).

SHIELD OF EARTH

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You fill yourself with the solidity and strength of earth to protect yourself from harm. Gain +2 Armor and +5 Maximum Health.

IMPREGNABLE SELF

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You focus your sense of self into an unbreakable gem, becoming unshakable. Gain Adamant 2 and +5 Maximum Animity.

UNDERSTANDING OF MATTER

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You gain an intuitive control over solid matter. You may shape earth and metal you touch as if it was the consistency of clay. In addition to its creative uses, you may do 3d6 damage ignoring Armor when using this to damage metal or earth structures. For other targets, ignore 2 points of Armor when making Melee Attacks.

FORCE OF EARTH
10 Fortune. Meditation.

You make yourself harder and denser as you make attacks, increasing the power behind your attacks. Gain Augment 2 on Melee Combat Tests.

ENDURING MEDITATIONS
10 Fortune.

Your meditation effects last for one week instead of 24 hours. Once per day when meditating for at least 10 minutes you may spend 1 Grit to heal 2 Health and 2 Animity Damage.

MOUNTAIN STANCE
10 Fortune. Requires 3 other Way of Earth paradigm abilities.

When you take the defend Backup Action, Melee Combat attacks you make until the end of your next turn gain Augment 3.

STONE'S TIMELESS RESERVE
20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 meditations from the Way of Earth.

Gain +4 Aegis.

SCHOLARS OF THE OBJECT'S FORM
10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all Tech and Arts Tests to build or repair objects.

UNYIELDING EARTH
20 Fortune. Requires 2 meditations from the Way of Earth.

While you have a meditation active and are hit by an attack that would do damage, you may spend 1 Grit as an Interrupt Action to roll Magic Arts. If the result is higher than the roll that hits you, you take no damage.

ENDURANCE OF ANCIENT MOUNTAINS
30 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 4 meditations from the Way of Earth.

Whenever you take damage to Health or Animity, you may spend any amount of Grit. Reduce damage by 4 per Grit spent.

WAY OF WATER

A drop of water is easy to move, but hard to destroy. Deform it and it will regrow; boil it and it will rain again. Its simplicity is its strength, for there is nothing about it that cannot be remade with ease.
—Water Yojin Teaching

The Way of Water embodies the fluidity of water, parting before adversity but always reforming afterwards.

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sublime Affinity. A Way of Water Yojin may have 1 meditation active if they have taken any abilities from this paradigm.

For each additional 4 abilities from this paradigm, they may have an additional meditation active simultaneously (see "Casting Sublime Magic" on pg 67).

ONE WITH WATER
10 Fortune. Meditation.

You can breathe water as air, and gain +2d6 on all physicality Tests related to swimming.

WATER WHIP
10 Fortune. Meditation.

While this meditation is active, when making a Melee Attack, you may replace your Melee Combat skill with Magic Arts to target anyone within 10m. If you hit, instead of doing damage, you may move you and your target any distance towards each other and your target is Grappled (see "Grapple" on pg 57), requiring them to make an opposed Melee Combat or Physicality Test vs your Magic Arts skill as a Main Action in order to move. If you move or make another attack, the Grappled condition ends.

PURIFY
10 Fortune. Meditation.

You gain +4 Aegis and Guard against poison effects. You may remove any impurities out of water you touch, making it potable and refreshing. You may heal any poison or other metabolic effects or damage on a touched target by making a Magic Arts Test vs the TN of the poison. On a Success any lingering effects are removed; on a Dynamic Success heal up to 5 damage done by the effect. On a Critical Success instead heal up to 10 damage from the effect. A target may only benefit from healing once per effect.

CALM MIND

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You gain Adamant +2, and whenever you spend Grit to negate Animity damage, you gain an equal amount of temporary Grit that lasts until the end of your next turn before being lost.

FLUID MEDITATIONS

10 Fortune.

You may spend 2 Grit as a Main Action to change a meditation to another meditation.

FLOWING STANCE

10 Fortune. Requires 3 other Way of Water paradigm abilities.

Whenever you are attacked, you may immediately spend 1 Grit to take the Focus Backup Action.

SCHOLARS OF THE BODY

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all Science Tests related to medicine.

GO WITH THE FLOW

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Water.

Whenever you take 5 or more damage (after all other effects), you take 3 less damage, to a minimum of one.

POWERFUL CURRENT

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Water

Whenever you get a Dynamic or Critical Success with an unarmed attack, you may move the target 5m in a direction of your choice.

REDIRECTED EFFORT

20 Fortune. Requires Fluid Mediations and 2 other abilities from the Way of Water.

You may change meditations whenever you spend Grit

AN OCEAN SHALL REFILL

30 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 4 other meditations from the Way of Water.

You roll one additional dice on Grit Tests (keep 3 total). On a Dynamic Success on a Grit Test, heal 5 Health and Animity damage. On a Critical Success, heal 10 Health and Animity damage and remove a Consequence.

WAY OF FIRE

Fire is the great revealer—it sweeps away the underbrush, revealing the great oaks; it melts away the slag, revealing the steel.
—Fire Yojin Teaching

The Way of Fire embodies the flickering, inconstant, and destructive nature of fire.

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sublime Affinity. A Way of Fire yojin may have 1 meditation active if they have taken any abilities from this paradigm. For each additional 4 abilities from this paradigm, they may have an additional meditation active simultaneously. (See **Using Sublime Magic**, above).

FOCUS INTO INTENT

10 Fortune.

You may end a Meditation to roll +1d6 on a Test and treat the Test as Inspired.

SOUL OF FIRE

10 Fortune. Meditation.

Whenever you trigger an Impulse, gain an additional +2 Grit. You gain Adamant 1.

EXPLOSIVE BURST

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You may spend 2 Grit on a turn to gain Augment 2 and +1 Backup Action. End this Meditation.

PERILOUS TARGET

10 Fortune. Meditation.

Whenever you take Health or Animity damage, you may spend 1 Grit. If you do, the target takes 1d6 damage of the same type.

BURNING TOUCH

10 Fortune. Meditation.

Your unarmed attacks do 2d6 + Brawn fire damage. You may end this meditation to make a Magic Arts Test vs Aegis of all targets within 1m. On a Success, do 3d6 fire damage to each target.

ASHES OF THE PHOENIX

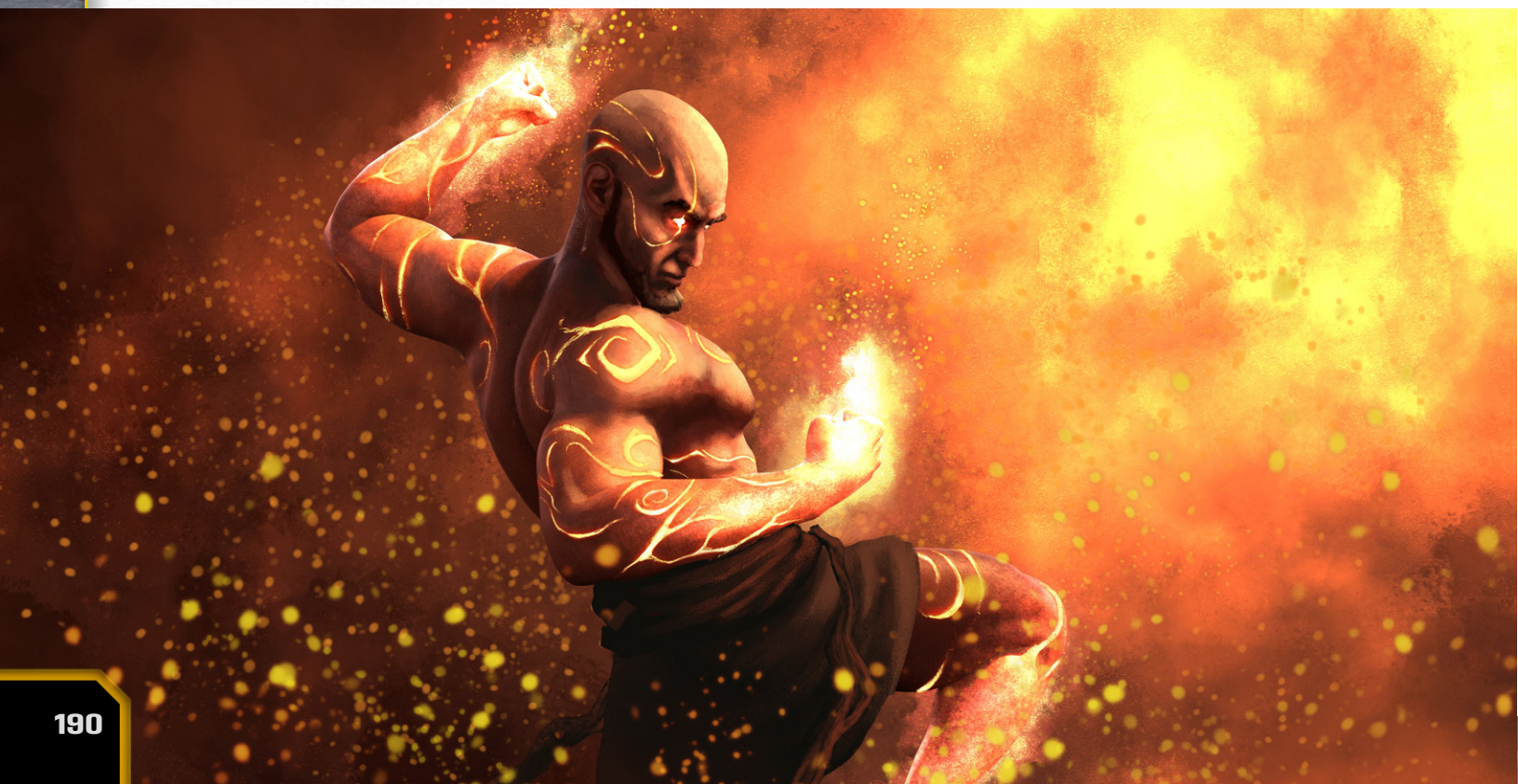
10 Fortune. Meditation.

Whenever you succeed on a Grit Test, gain +2 Health, Animity, and Grit

WILDFIRE STANCE

10 Fortune. Requires 3 other Way of Fire paradigm abilities.

Once per turn when you do damage to a target with a Melee Attack, you may spend 3 Grit to move up to 3m and make an immediate additional Melee Attack against a different target.



SCHOLARS OF THE HEART

10 Fortune.

You may take 2 Irresistible Animity damage to gain +1d6 and Inspired on an Arts Test.

WILDFIRE BURNS

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Fire.

Whenever you make a Dynamic or Critical Success against an opponent, you may choose to give them a Consequence in addition to the normal effect of the Dynamic or Critical Success. If you do, the GM gains 3 Grit.

EAGER SPARK

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Fire.

You gain +6 initiative, and gain Augment 3 on the first Round of a cinematic.

REKINDLED MEDITATION

20 Fortune. Requires 3 other abilities from the Way of Fire.

If you have used an effect that ends a meditation since the start of your last turn, you may take a Backup Action and spend 1 Grit to make a TN 12 Magic Arts Test. If you succeed, at the end of your next turn the meditation becomes active again.

BODY OF FIRE

30 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 4 other meditations from the Way of Fire.

Your eyes flicker with flame, and your body is warm to the touch, erupting at your will. You gain 20 Armor against all fire damage. You may spend 3 Grit as an interrupt to make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against a target within **T** range. On a Success, they take 3d6 Fire Damage.

WAY OF AIR

To understand air, breathe.
—Air Yojin Teaching

The Way of Air embodies the amorphous speed of air, and take on its lightness, speed, and intangibility.

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sublime Affinity. A Way of Air Yojin may have 1 meditation active if they have taken any abilities from this paradigm.

For each additional 4 abilities from this paradigm, they may have an additional meditation active simultaneously (see "Casting Sublime Magic" on pg 67).

FLICKERING MEDITATION

10 Fortune.

You may spend a Backup Action to gain the effects of a meditation until the end of your next turn.

MEDITATION OF MOVEMENT

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You may spend 1 Grit to take the Focus action (see pg 34) as a Free Action whenever you take the Minor Move (pg 34) action.

LIGHT BODY
10 Fortune. Meditation.

Gain +1d6 on all Physicality Tests related to movement. When you take the Major Move action (see pg 33) under your own power you gain Acceleration 3. While able to freely move, you take no damage from falling, and may always land on your feet.

FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY
10 Fortune. Meditation.

Gain +2 Guard. As an Interrupt Action, you may spend 1 Grit to increase your physical Armor by 3 for one attack.

SUPERNATURAL LEAPS
20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Air.

You may use Magic Arts in lieu of Physicality for Tests related to moving quickly (such as chases). When moving you may jump over any intervening obstacles, ignoring gaps and difficult terrain without making a Test. You may move in any direction, as long as there is a solid place to land on.

EYE OF THE HURRICANE
10 Fortune.

You gain +5 Adamant and +3 on all defenses until the start of your next turn on any turn you take no actions besides move. If you took no actions besides a Major or Minor Move in your last turn, you may spend 1 Grit as an Interrupt Action in response to an attack, if you do you may roll Magic Arts and replace your guard with the result if higher.

SOARING STANCE
10 Fortune. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of Air.

If you take a Minor Move action before a Melee Attack, you gain Augment 2 on that attack. If you take a Minor Move after an attack, you gain +1 guard until the end of your next turn.

SCHOLARS OF THE STARS AND TIME
10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all Science Tests related to Astronomy, and Humanities Tests related to History.

WHIRLING STRIKES
20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 3 other abilities from the Way of Air.

After taking a Main Action, you may spend 1 Grit to move 10m.

BECOME THE WIND
30 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 4 other meditations from the Way of Air.

You gain a max Speed of 3. When you are hit by an attack that is a normal Success, you may spend 2 Grit to negate that attack. If you do not take a movement action on your next turn after negating an attack, end this meditation.

WAY OF THE VOID

All things were nothing before they began.
—Void Yojin Teaching

The most enigmatic of the Yojin, the Way of the Void sees the absence of material as worthy to aspire to as its presence. By transcending materiality, Way of the Void Yojin learn to transcend physical and psychological adversity. Skilled Way of the Void Yojin can create an emptiness around themselves, forcing things away, or filling the emptiness to bring them closer.

Taking any choices from this list requires being trained in Magic Arts and selecting Sublime Affinity. A Way of the Void Yojin may have 1 meditation active if they have taken any abilities from this paradigm.

For each additional 4 abilities from this paradigm, they may have an additional meditation active simultaneously (see "Casting Sublime Magic" on pg 67).

EMPTINESS OF MIND
10 Fortune. Meditation.

Gain 1 maximum Grit. You may spend a Main Action to change this meditation to another meditation.

IMPERTURBABLE CORE
10 Fortune. Meditation.

You gain +4 on all Grit Tests. If you get a Dynamic or Critical Success on a Grit Test, you lose the Consequence you gained for dropping to zero Grit.

POTENTIALITY

10 Fortune. Meditation.

After you roll, you may spend 1 Grit to make that roll Inspired.

BENEATH NOTICE

10 Fortune.

When you are remaining perfectly stationary, you may make a Magic Arts Test. Your result becomes the TN to notice you. This effect may fail if you find yourself in a position that can't help but draw attention to yourself (e.g. standing in a doorway someone is going through).

FILL THE VOID

10 Fortune. Meditation.

You may, as a Backup Action, make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against all enemies within 50m. On a Success, they are moved 10m towards you.

EMPTY STANCE

10 Fortune. Requires 3 other Way of the Void paradigm abilities.

When you take the Hold Action for a Melee Attack in response to an enemy's action, you may move up to 3m as part of the Melee Attack and gain Augment 5 on the attack.

SCHOLARS OF IGNORANCE

10 Fortune.

You gain Reliable 3 on all untrained skills.

EMPTY THE VOID

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires Fill the Void and 2 other meditation from the Way of the Void.

You may, as a Main Action, make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against all creatures of your choice within 50m. On a Success, they are moved 10m away from you and take 2d6 physical damage.

EMPTY SPACE

20 Fortune. Interrupt. Requires 3 other abilities from the Way of the Void.

You may spend 1 Grit to use this ability as an interrupt. If you do you may take no actions on your next turn but gain Adamant 5 and +5 Aegis and Vigilance until you take another action.

NULLIFY

20 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 2 other meditations from the Way of the Void.

As a Main Action, you may make an Magic Arts Test opposed by the casting skill of the opposing caster. On a Success, you end a spell effect within 50m that they initiated. The opposing caster gets a +2 for each bar or point of dissonance involved to cast the spell.

VOID BODY

30 Fortune. Meditation. Requires 4 other meditations from the Way of the Void.

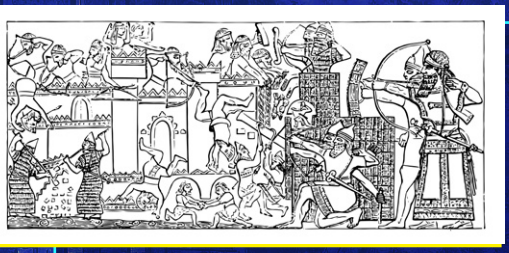
You may spend 1 Grit as a Backup Action to become partially insubstantial until the end of your next turn. You may move through any barrier less than 1 foot deep, and may ignore gravity while insubstantial. You gain +4 on all physicality Tests related to stealth while partially insubstantial. While partially insubstantial, you take and inflict half as much physical damage.

E ROAD

PART IV
THE WORLD OF
NEO BABYLON

TIMELINE

- BR = Babylonian Reckoning
- 0 BR is 605 BCE
- 1200 BR is the Shattering, which is 595 CE
- 2200 BR is the founding of Neo Babylon,which is 1595 CE
- 2650 BR is 2045 CE



21 BEFORE BABYLONIAN RECKONING (BBR)

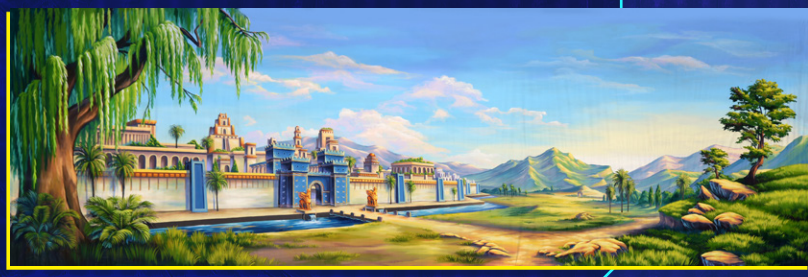
Following the death of Ashurbanipal of Assyria, the Babylonians sacked Nineveh and absconded with his library of tablets. Using the knowledge contained therein, they developed an understanding of the nature of arcane magic. Throughout the reign of Naboplassar, Babylonian arcanists developed increasingly powerful civilian and military applications of arcane magic that altered nearly every aspect of Babylonian society.

4 BR

Babylon invaded and conquered Kemet, driving most of the ruling class westward into exile. Babylonian arcanists learned to incorporate Kemetian light magic into their magical practice, while Kemetian religion was syncretized into Babylonian faith, swelling the ranks and abilities of the Baru.

20-33 BR

The Babylonian Empire stretched across the entire Fertile Crescent, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Asia Minor. Nebuchadnezzar II built the Ishtar Gate and great walls of Babylon. The empire saw unprecedented economic and population growth and a renaissance of culture and artwork drawing on the previous 2000 years of culture in the region.



21 BBR • 1 BR • 4 CR • 20-30 CR • 44 CR • 66-75 CR • 200-300 BR

1 BABYLONIAN RECKONING (BR)

Nebuchadnezzar II took the throne of Babylon.

44 BR

Nebuchadnezzar disappeared, handing the Empire to Amel-Marduk. As his successor was far less politically adept, the arcanists began to entrench themselves as the powers beyond the throne, beginning the slow process of converting Babylon to an arcanocracy—an empire ultimately controlled by its powerful mages.

66-75 BR

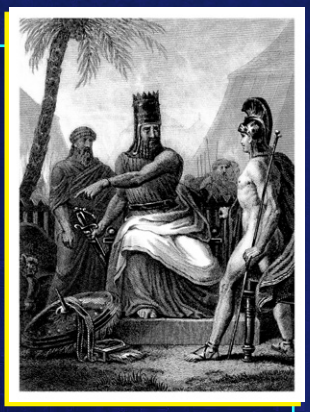
Babylo-Persian War. Persia pressed south towards Babylon, spurring the empire to withdraw forces from Northern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and counter-invade, starting with Lydia, then Armenia. Allying with Media, Babylon pushed into Persia and eventually Parthia. During this time arcane knowledge began to disseminate among the elites of cultures adjacent to Babylon.

200-300 BR

With the aid of dwarven nomadic merchants, Kemet's government in exile created alliances along the African West coast and inland. This Senegambian/ Kemet alliance began to thrive.

269 BR

Nearly three centuries after Babylonian dominance began, Alexander the Unifier brought together Sparta, Athens, Macedon and Syracuse to form the Zepheryan Alliance. Alexander halted the march of the Babylonians at Byzantium, and brokered peace, offering the Hellenes the first respite from war in centuries.



282 BR

Alexander expanded the Zephyran alliance as far North as Lutesia. Alexander accepted an invitation to a hidden court in a forest NorthWest of Lutesia. Hoping to gain allies, Alexander instead emerged from the forest days later with a mysterious illness. His eventual death prompted his warriors to burn the forest, pushing a huge population of various non-human species into the world of humans.

632 BR

The Hebrew prophet Yeshua Barmiriam rallied followers and spoke against Babylonian rule. He was executed, but his followers went underground, becoming known as nomastics, and prone to anti-establishment religious activity.

730-955 BR

The Senegambian Kemet Empire (now known as Senekemet) made war on Babylon. Babylon's armies and arcanists, being stretched too thin over too many miles, were vulnerable to the clandestine tactics of Senekemet. After negotiating peace, Senekemet and Babylon made a treaty to support each other militarily and culturally. Senekemet controlled a tapestry of economically valuable territories across north and west Africa. They established three regional capitals: Dakar, Carthage, and Memphis. Dakar became known as Little Babylon.

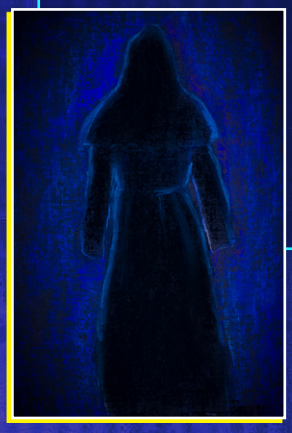
800 BR

Driven by the desire of the Mayans to unite maritime trade on the western and eastern coasts, they embarked on an ambitious effort to create the Sunaban canal with their allies and trading partners from Polynesia and the Pacific coast of South Atlantica. The combined political effort results in the creation of what would become the Sunaban trade empire.

269 BR • 282 BR • 400-600 BR • 632 BR • 730-955 BR • 800 BR • 851 BR • CONTINUE

400-600 BR

A period of relative stability considered by some to be the "Golden Age" of the ancient world. Trade flourished with Babylon a central hub connecting the disparate parts of the known world. Their language and coins were the standard of trade, even as the Empire itself was still controlled by its arcanists. From Africa and Erebu and across Babylon and Asia, goods and knowledge flowed, but the arcanists held magical secrets tightly. Babylon's power was held in check in Erebu by the Zephyran Alliance, but skirmishes and culture wars were common with populations to the east. Monumental structures for worship, public good, entertainment, and displays of opulence were built as cities thrived. Mages from across the "known world" communicated with one another and formed rivalries and lasting bonds of friendship, but long-distance knowledge remained uncommon.



851 BR

Upon the completion of the Sunaban canal, the Sunabans quickly expanded their trade routes across the Atlantic coast of South Atlantica, and ultimately across the Atlantic Ocean, making first contact with Senekemetian ships. As trade flourished, Senekemet's historians suggested this new continent was not the Atlantis discussed by the ancients, but called it Atlantica in homage. Senekemetian and Sunaban cultures mingled as a result of trade.

1200 BR

A catastrophic flood, the Shattering, sank the entire Fertile Crescent, from Babylon to the Mediterranean Sea, beneath the ocean. Baru texts say Enlil the Storm Lord rebelled against Marduk by striking at his favored city, submerging Babylon beneath the newly formed Rahav Sea and ending Babylonian political dominance. Many arcanists survived but were not able to establish a successor state.

The peoples of the fertile crescent were forced into other parts of the world, but took their culture, faith, and magics with them.

The Shattering led to decades of calamities world wide, with earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanos devastating much of the world. In the wake of the Shattering, Tempests, magical bursts of uncontrolled energy, become far more common and more powerful, becoming a major threat that persists to this day.

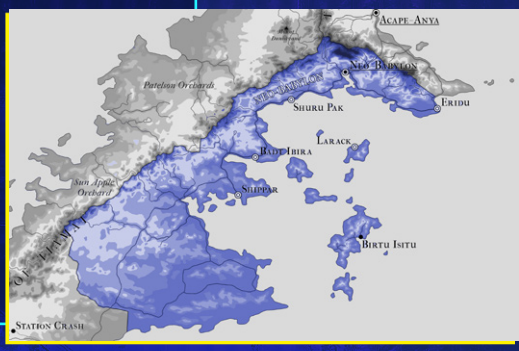
Aggressive attacks from the Northern tribes began to break up the Zephyran alliance, resulting in a patchwork of states across Erebu. The alliance members diverged politically and culturally, but maintained a sense of common identity.

1904 BR

Rise of the Taboýan Empire east of Erebu. Spanning over six centuries, the Taboýans became a powerful and diverse culture blending military prowess, administrative innovation, and cultural richness, leaving an indelible mark on the Middle East, Southeast Erebu, and North Africa.

2097-2106 BR

As the population began to recover in Erebu, expansion across the Atlantic was discussed and wealthy mage houses and guilds began to fund expeditions. Immediately, Azore was "discovered." Spearheaded and funded by powerful mages from various nations, six magic colleges were founded on Azore's east coast. To support this endeavor, immigrants from around the world found meaningful work supporting the incredible research being done. Soon, a multicultural settlement sprang up around the colleges, thanks in part to magical innovation and trade with the native peoples of Azore, who were of many different species.



1200 BR • 1585 BR • 1701-1875 BR • 1904 BR • 2097-2106 BR • 2107 BR • 2128-2154 BR

1585 BR

Eiríkr Rauði and his men, banished from Scandza, discovered the continent of Azore between Atlantica and the Old World, and intermingled with Northeastern Atlantican peoples there, becoming the Nýfirar people who populate the region that would become Dragonhead on Azore's northern coast.

1701-1875 BR

A plague of undeath spread across Erebu, and many communities fell to the creatures. Eventually, crusading militaires from the east joined the free peoples of the west to fight for their liberation and victory. All traces of the vampires and undead legions were wiped away. This period greatly reduced the population of Erebu, and led to the independence of both Eire and Pretanike from the continental alliances. A side effect to the shortage of workers resulted in better conditions for workers and their families.

2107 BR

The Chaldani, an indigenous people on Azore's east coast, welcomed the newcomers to their continent with open arms. A kinship between the mage colleges and Acape-Anya, the largest Chaldani city, was forged right away.

2128-2154 BR

Various advanced civilizations of non-humans were discovered on Azore. Azore established relations with the predominantly elven nation of Val Broceliande, the mostly orcish and dwarven people of Tulko, and the goblins of Churuq.

2200 BR

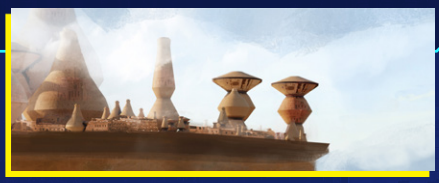
1,000 years after the Shattering, the city of Neo Babylon was officially founded on Azore's east coast, with the dream of resurrecting the spirit of Old Babylon where laws were first codified and equal accountability was provided for everyone, from peasant, to priest, to ruler. Neo Babylon was ruled by a council called the Ukkim, which was at first dominated by arcanists; over time, they gradually incorporated or ceded seats to the wealthy and powerful from guilds and corporations.

2224 BR

Luminarian refugees, fleeing religious persecution in Senekemet, settled on the southeast of Azore, founding the city of Santso, and ultimately, the nation of Kuujitt.

2303 BR

The African Union was formed to protect African economic interests of the peoples south of Senekemet.



2512-2544 BR

The First War of Scars was triggered by the assassination of progressive princess Cholec of the Altaipheran Yettin and involved major powers in Erebu. It saw trench warfare, new military technologies, and ended with a treaty imposing harsh penalties on many yettin. The Autumnal Rebellion (2514 BR) was the founding event of the United Yettin Conference with a core of yettin opposed to the conflict. The second war emerged from unresolved issues of the first, with the Bloody Claw's expansionist ambitions sparking conflict. It witnessed widespread atrocities, and concluded with the victory of the alliance which included Neo Babylon. These conflicts shaped the post-war order with Neo Babylon as a world leader and Dakar as a major center of communications and research and development.

2200 BR • 2224 BR • 2303 BR • 2415 BR • 2471 BR • 2489 BR • 2512-2544 BR • CONTINUE

2415 BR

Iberian nationalists, called the Duendes, nursed the resentment of many dwarves and orcs for being overlooked in Erebu's economy and society and their military pushed conquest across Erebu. Many Iberians deserted, refusing to fight; large numbers settled in Acape-Anya just North of Neo Babylon. The Duendes rose and fell several times in the following decades.

2471 BR

Lutesia was conquered by the Duendes army. Many elves fled the destruction and occupation and became refugees on Azore, founding a new home they called Le Sanctuaire. Near the end of 2471, Lutesian fighters broke the Duendes stranglehold on them for good.

2489 BR

A raging storm caused a great flood in Neo Babylon, immersing everything up to the Great Ziggurat. In the aftermath, the streets of the city were raised, in many cases as much as 15 meters above the marshlands. As the Ziggurat grew, more and more of the old city was replaced with foundation for the new. The previous city, now labeled the Undercity, became home to debtors, new immigrants, and criminals.

2568 BR

The first Fae-led protests against the government took place in Val Broceliande.

2570 BR

Scientists discovered cybertech, a new paradigm of technology that rivaled the abilities of even the most powerful mage.

2575 BR

The Babylon Space Program was founded with the aim of exploring the universe beyond the atmosphere. The BSP built a massive campus in an open desert area far to the south.

2580 BR

Early cybertech applications began making their way into the public sphere, including autonomous shipping vehicles, global communications, and the first, crude cyberware limbs.

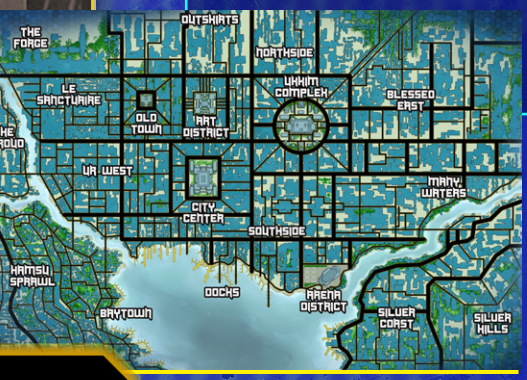
2610 BR

The Trust of Guilds and Corporations (TG&C) was formed as the authoritative economic regulatory body in Neo Babylon, overseeing and governing the intricate web of guilds and corporations that drive the city's economy. TG&C stabilized the city's financial systems, managed currency circulation, and ensured the balance of power among the influential economic entities within the city and its economic allies.

2568 BR • 2570 BR • 2575-2590 BR • 2580 BR • 2595 BR • 2610 BR • 2613 BR

2575-2590 BR

Neo Babylon annexed the surrounding settlements. Hamsu, Baytown, Willam, the Silver Coast, and Le Sanctuaire, and the area between them all became part of Neo Babylon and subject to its authority. The Ukkim continued to lose its outwardly arconist majority as technological developments began to empower growing corporate monopolies outside arcane control. Wealth began to become the true mark of authority.



2595 BR

The Great Strike was organized by communities who feel ignored by the Ukkim and their corporations. They demanded a right to be represented by their own people, rejecting centuries of authoritarian control. In response, Neo Babylon implemented the Envoy program to pacify the people without making any real concessions.

2613 BR

The Babylon Space program launched the gargantuan Eana Star Station into the world's orbit. Minutes after launch, it crashed, leaving the crash site and the BSP campus profoundly irradiated. It remains a twisted, high-tech wasteland that scars the area.

2616 BR

Excavation while constructing the Argenton district in Neo Babylon uncovered the lair of a gargantuan monarch dragon, which devastated the partially constructed district before fleeing to parts unknown. The wealthy who planned to move there abandoned the city, making room for the district to be taken over by various factions of organized crime and other undesirable elements, and spitefully renamed the district The Shroud.

2646 BR

Kushia, the aladlamma, purchased the Crystal high rise in Ur West, and moved into the penthouse. Her ownership of the iconic building is puzzling, given the solitary and secretive nature of aladlamma. Many inhabitants of Ur West admitted to discomfort having such a powerful being so close in proximity, yet towering above them. Despite the mix of fear, awe, and curiosity, she has become a central figure in Ur West and a source of many jobs, some of which are rumored to be less than legal.

2650 BR

Now. Across Neo Babylon, envoys of all ideologies are being empowered and needed by their communities like never before, while the government, corporations, organized crime, and demonic forces continue to wage silent war on everyday people.

2616 BR · 2625-2638 BR · 2646 BR · 2649 BR · 2650 BR

2625-2638 BR

Beginning in 2625 BR, the Enkeura, a political group that considered non-fae peoples inferior, infiltrated Tulko, fostering animosity toward Val Brocelíande. This escalates into the First Fairy War in 2632 BR, resulting in the Enkeura's coup and Val Brocelíande's leaders fleeing into exile. The Alliance of Azore forms in 2633 BR, uniting against the Enkeura's march on Churuq. Unexpected aid from Sunaba in 2635 BR halted the invasion, leading to an armistice with partial territory returns. In 2638 BR, Sorcier Adelante and the Valkyr Company defected, joining forces to restore Val Brocelíande. The war concluded in 2639 BR with the Enkeura's retreat and pardons for their followers, while the Valkyr Company was disbanded.

2649 BR

A street prophet calling himself Sander Greystar gave an impassioned sermon on the walls of the Ukkim Complex, which unexpectedly escalated into a riot, becoming a pivotal moment in Neo Babylon's social unrest and galvanizing disenfranchised citizens to voice their grievances. The incident was an inflection point for envoys and fanned an anti-authoritarian spark now smoldering among the lower castes.

History of Neo Babylon

OLD BABYLON

In ancient Babylon, Shar Nebuchadnezzar II unlocked the secrets of arcane magic, using them to dominate the surrounding peoples, marking the beginning of Babylonian Reckoning (BR). Starting with the Pharaohs of Kemet, The Shar conquered much of North Africa and the Fertile Crescent, appropriating the culture, magic, and technology of those he conquered and forcing their leaders west into exile. Aware of the dangers of the power he had used to dominate his neighbors, Nebuchadnezzar limited the study of magic to a loyal council of Arcanists called the Ukkim. These mages oversaw the research of magic and its use within the entire empire, tightly regulating what magic was available outside their own halls.

Nebuchadnezzar's successors continued the expansion of Babylon. Nearly three centuries after the conquests began, the Babylonian empire stretched across the fertile crescent, south into Kemet, across the Arabian peninsula, North to Persia and Parthia, East to Sindhu, and West to Byzantium. At its height, it was the most glorious, influential, and terrifying nation the world had ever seen, seemingly poised to conquer the entirety of the world.

A World Like Our Own

Subversion is set on an Earth very much like our own, with one key difference—in the World of Neo Babylon, magic is real. In the ancient past, magical powers and wondrous creatures existed only in the realm of gods, legends, and epic poems. In Subversion, dwarves, goblins, humans, orcs, and yettin emerged as the world's first civilizations, largely apart from each other, each expanding their cultures and military might. Even so, history more or less played out as it did in our world, up until a particular point, in which magic changed everything.

In our world, Shar Nebuchadnezzar II, reigned from 605 BCE – 562 BCE. He inherited the title shar, or king, from his father, who founded the second Babylonian Empire. At its height, Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon controlled the entire fertile crescent, including Assyria, Phoenicia, Judah, the remains of Israel, and parts of Arabia, appropriating their best people and technology. But Nebuchadnezzar achieved little military success after his failure to conquer Kemet. He and Babylon went into decline until, at last, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE. Upon Alexander's death in 323 BCE, Babylon was abandoned.

But in the World of Neo Babylon, that isn't how it happened.

ALEXANDER THE UNIFIER

Faced with almost certain subjugation by their continuing expanding neighbor, Alexander the Unifier brought together the leaders of Sparta, Athens, Macedon, and Syracuse to form the Zepheryan Alliance. With Alexander as their general, they halted the expansion of Babylon at Byzantium, and brokered peace, offering the Hellenistic world their first respite from constant war in centuries. Alexander expanded his alliance West, conquering the Romans, the Iberian peninsula, and sailing South to conquer Carthage. The alliance, now

the Zepheryan Empire, pushed its borders North, offering civilization and security to the Gauls and Celts, some of which accepted gladly, while others accepted at the end of a sword.

As Alexander pressed north, establishing the city of Lutesia as a base for a further campaign north, Alexander was approached by the inhabitants of the Broceliande forest to the north. Hoping to gain allies, Alexander accepted an invitation to a hidden court among the trees of the Broceliande forest. Alexander instead emerged from the forest days later with a mysterious illness. His death, days later, prompted his warriors to burn the forest, forcing the elves, as well as various other peoples and creatures called fae, into the world of humans. The scarred land marked the boundary between the Zephyran empire and the Northern tribes for centuries to follow. Some refugees from Broceliande made their way as far as Babylon, with magical secrets to offer in exchange for a new life. Lutesia itself absorbed many Brocelian elves, becoming one of the earliest, most species-diverse cities in the world.

THE RISE OF THE UKKIM

Their defeat at Byzantium presaged several centuries of difficulties for the Babylonians. Even as their armies recovered, the Babylonians found themselves surrounded by emboldened enemies, ready to take advantage of any distraction or weakness. By 845 BR, the Empire of Senekemet, made of exiled Kemetians and others from further west, reemerged to make war on their ancient destroyers. Stretched too thin at the borders of their empire, Senekemet's army emerged from the marshes and laid siege to Babylon, nearly destroying it. The Ukkim, now the de facto power behind the throne of Babylon, made a deal with Senekemet to save Babylon. The Shar was deposed, the Ukkim now directly ruled Babylon, and Senekemet retreated, seemingly assuaged by whatever gift the Ukkim had given them.

Within decades, the Ukkim, no longer bound by the whims of the Shar, aggressively pursued new magical advances, and soon the Babylonian Empire returned to conquering states, cities, and tribes in seemingly endless succession. Each victory brought them new resources, people, and magical knowledge, and soon Babylon appeared again poised to create a magical empire able to dominate the world.

THE SHATTERING

1,200 years after it began, Babylon's supremacy came to an unexpected end. According to the legends, a great flood sank the entire fertile crescent, from Babylon to the Mediterranean Sea. There are hundreds of explanations for the Shattering, none of which are universally accepted as reality. Neo Babylon's official Baru texts say Enlil the Storm Lord, previously lord of the gods, gathered his rogue demon-gods, the Anunnaki, and rebelled against Marduk, who had replaced him, by striking at his favored, submerging Babylon beneath the newly formed Rahav Sea. Others claim it was a great magical catastrophe brought about by arcanists attempting to shape the land itself, who in their hubris sunk it instead. Some scientists suggest it was simply an earthquake, which sunk the land deep enough that the seas whelmed it. Regardless of the cause, this event became known as the Shattering. The survivors of Babylon scattered across the world, bearing their culture, beliefs, and magic to all corners of the known world.

With the shattering came ecological and magical cataclysm. The sudden shift in plate tectonics triggered massive earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic activity that lasted for decades before subsiding. Tempests, spontaneous manifestations of magical energy, grew in size and frequency, in some cases causing devastation that leveled cities—a threat that remains salient into the present.

DISCOVERY OF AZORE

In 2097 BR, a group of merchants attempting to bypass Dakar and develop a direct trade route between Erebu and the Sunabán Trade Empire made a startling discovery—a previously unknown continent in the North Atlantic. Some historians suggested that Azore was the ancient land of Atlantis, but others speculated the continent of Azore rose from the seafloor as an equal and opposite reaction to the Shattering of Old Babylon.

Efforts to explore and exploit the new continent grew, with many nations sending their mages to Azore to facilitate the new settlements. Many of the mages decided to stay and found a site of arcane learning formed from six magic colleges representing each of the energies of magic. A thriving multicultural community soon sprang up around the colleges, thanks in part to magical innovation and trade with the different native peoples of Azore.

THE FOUNDING OF NEO BABYLON

In 2200 BR, the city of Neo Babylon was officially founded, with the dream of resurrecting the spirit of Old Babylon, where laws were first codified and equal accountability was provided for everyone, from peasant, to priest, to ruler.

The new city adopted a council of sixty, selected by the arcane colleges at the core of the city to represent the twelve founding populations and Neo Babylon's local interests. This became the Ukkim council, which rules Neo Babylon to this day. Commerce grew quickly, and like the Babylon of old, Neo Babylon soon expanded its sphere of influence by exploiting its arcane knowledge to alternatively bribe and bully Azore's native populations. The founding of the great city marked the beginning of a new era for the world, and would become the centerpoint of the new Babylionian culture. That was 450 years ago.

For over 200 years, Neo Babylon seemed to grow from strength to strength, exceeding all expectations and becoming the largest city the world had ever seen. Powered by the ever expanding arcane colleges, Neo Babylon became the center of arcane magic, training nearly all the world's mages and ensuring that every major settlement had mages to light their streets, irrigate their crops, fuel their forges, and (more centrally) protect them from the mana storms. These arrangements, known as the Storm Treaties, provided a Levy from the other nations to Neo Babylon, ensuring that Neo Babylon never wanted for goods or services.

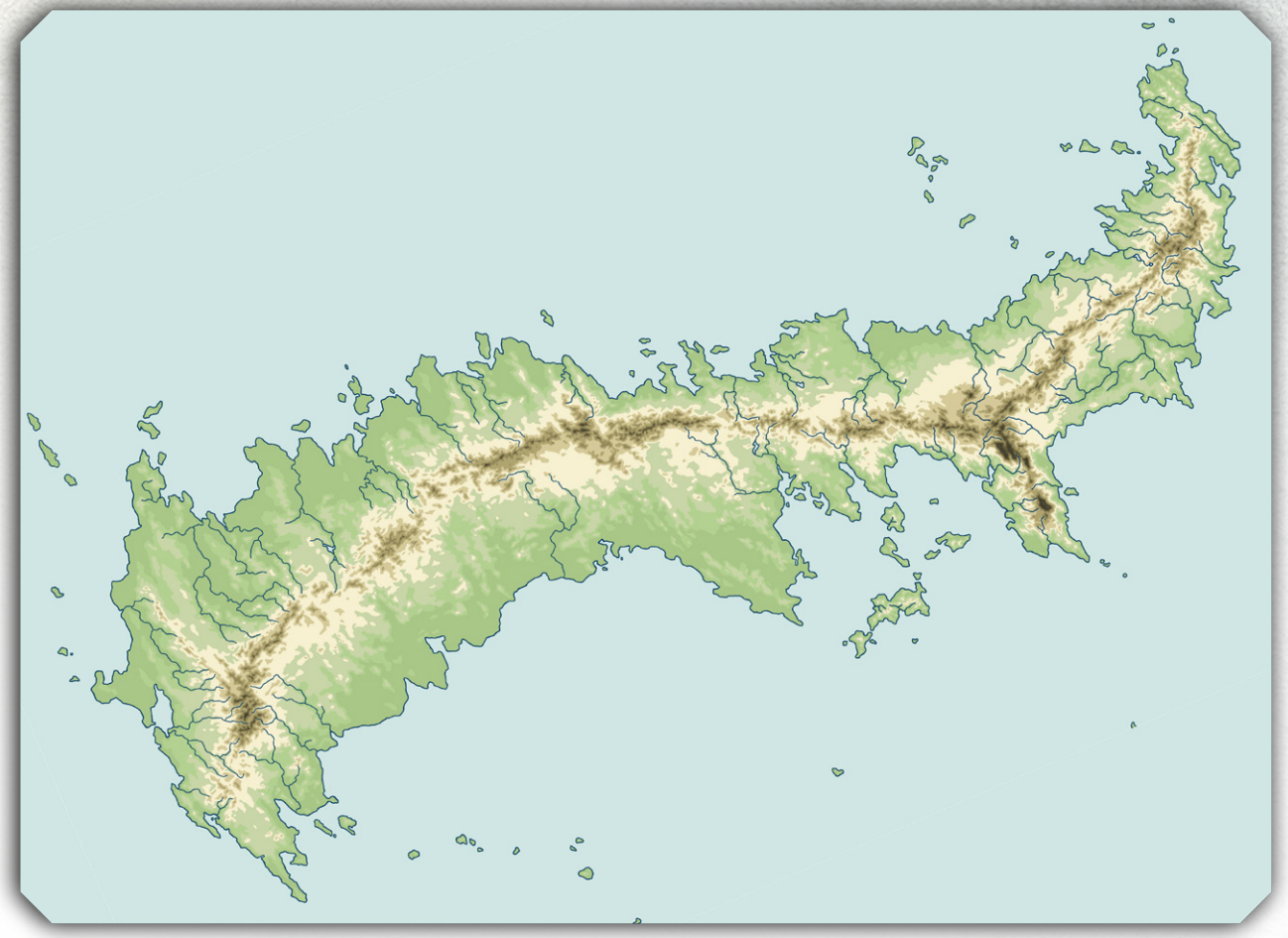
Just north of Neo Babylon, the native humans of Acape Anya proved to be reliable partners to Neo Babylon, even as to the South and West, the elvish people of Val Broceliande, the goblins of Churuq, the orcs of Tulko, and the various peoples of Kuujitt remained detached. Despite those on Azore who saw Neo Babylon with suspicion, many more saw opportunity to start new lives on the continent, borrowing Neo Babylon's economy to kickstart theirs. New cities such as Hamsu, Baytown, Silver Coast, and the pirate haven of Willam began to spring up on the outskirts of Neo Babylon, borrowing its influence for themselves.

TIMES OF TROUBLE

While Neo Babylon flourished, in Erebu, things were not well. A group of Iberian nationalists called the Duendes came to power, protesting the levies from the Storm Treaties being paid to Neo Babylon. They nursed the resentment of many dwarves and orcs who felt overlooked in Erebu's economy and society. The sentiment swept through Erebu first, and the conquests followed soon after. The Duendes swept through the Western Erebuan coast and even made their way to the north of Azore, recruiting when they could, and dominating when they couldn't. Many Iberians deserted the army, refusing to fight, with large numbers settling in Acape Anya just North of Neo Babylon. The Duendes rose and fell several times in the following decades, but in 2471, Lutesia was conquered by the Duendes army. Many elves fled the destruction and occupation and became refugees on Azore, founding a new home they called Le Sanctuaire. Near the end of 2471 BR, Lutesian fighters broke the Duendes stranglehold on them for good.

THE FLOOD

In 2489 BR, a raging storm flooded Neo Babylon, immersing everything up to the Great Ziggurat. In response to the damage, the Ukkim rebuilt almost all the city, raising the street level—in many cases as much as 20 meters above the marshlands. Those who could not afford to rebuild or live in new houses found themselves relegated to abandoned basements sealed into the foundations of the new city, their streets and homes relegated to a space for runoff from the storms. Seeing opportunity, the Ukkim declared that only those who could pay the city's levies and contribute to society would be allowed in the Overcity, while debtors, new immigrants, and criminals would be relegated to the Undercity unless they scrounged together the resources to prove they had the wherewithal to afford life in the overcity. Soon, the Undercity had grown to accommodate the influx of workers struggling to find reliable enough work to support



living in the Overcity—desperation exploited by many corporations looking for a temporary workforce for some purpose or another. Just enough resources from these jobs filter down to keep the Undercity operational, despite the lack of law enforcement, public utilities, or any other functional infrastructure.

THE WARS OF SCARS

The fifty years after the defeat of the Duendes marked a period of peace and relative prosperity among Neo Babylon and its trading partners. This peace was shattered by the First War of Scars, a brutal five year war that devastated much of Erebu and left millions dead. The First War of Scars began in 2512 BR when the Altaipheran princess Chalec Muhotash was assassinated while living in Eravasca in East Erebu. Chalec had been a notable voice against the prevailing view (championed by her father, King Illus Muhotash) against the cultural and technological isolation of Altaiphera from Erebu—her death curdled that distrust into a fury that sent the great Clans of Yettin and their nomadic human and centaur allies to war. Within days they had sacked Eravasca, and, unabated, the armies continued to roll across east Erebu, leaving devastation in their wake.

Millions perished, but as the Yettin marched toward Lutesia, a hastily assembled accord between the Erebuan states and the Alliance of Scandza eventually slowed the advance. The Altaipheran alliance began to succumb to infighting, as the Bugbears refused to fight further against their kin in Erebu, and tensions between the Almaslar clans and the rest of the Altaipherans ultimately culminated in the Autumnal Rebellion, with the rebel factions forming the United Yettin Conference to the East of Erebu, weakening the armies of Yettin and creating a buffer between Altaiphera and the West. Fighting on three fronts, and eventually surrounded, the Yettin were forced to surrender and retreat. Punitive measures were taken against Altiphera, impoverishing many Yettin. The armistice that ended the war is still celebrated each year in Lutesia, but many in Erebu became suspicious and cruel to large folk. Yettin, including the Bugbears and Almaslar who had helped turn the tide, along with orcs, and dwarves, who many Erebuans still saw as Duendes sympathizers, became the targets of increasing hostility.

Peace after the first war of scars was short lived. The Bloody Claw, an aggressive and expansive movement from within the Altaipheran Yettin, rose to prominence. Driven to fury by the punishing Erebuan and Scandzan sanctions and economic measures impoverishing Yettin across Altiphera, the Bloody Claw rallied the herds of minotaurs and centaurs North of Altaiphera, along with discontented orcs and dwarves from Asia Minor, spurred by the news of poor treatment of their cousins in Erebu. In 2538 BR, the Bloody Claw struck in a series of surprise attacks, their soldiers empowered by powerful magic previously unseen in Babylonian arcana. By 2540 BR, Lutesia was occupied by the Bloody Claw Yettin. Much of Southern Scandza and Northern Erebu were conquered and their leaders exiled or executed, with tattered armies forced to retreat to Azore or face annihilation.

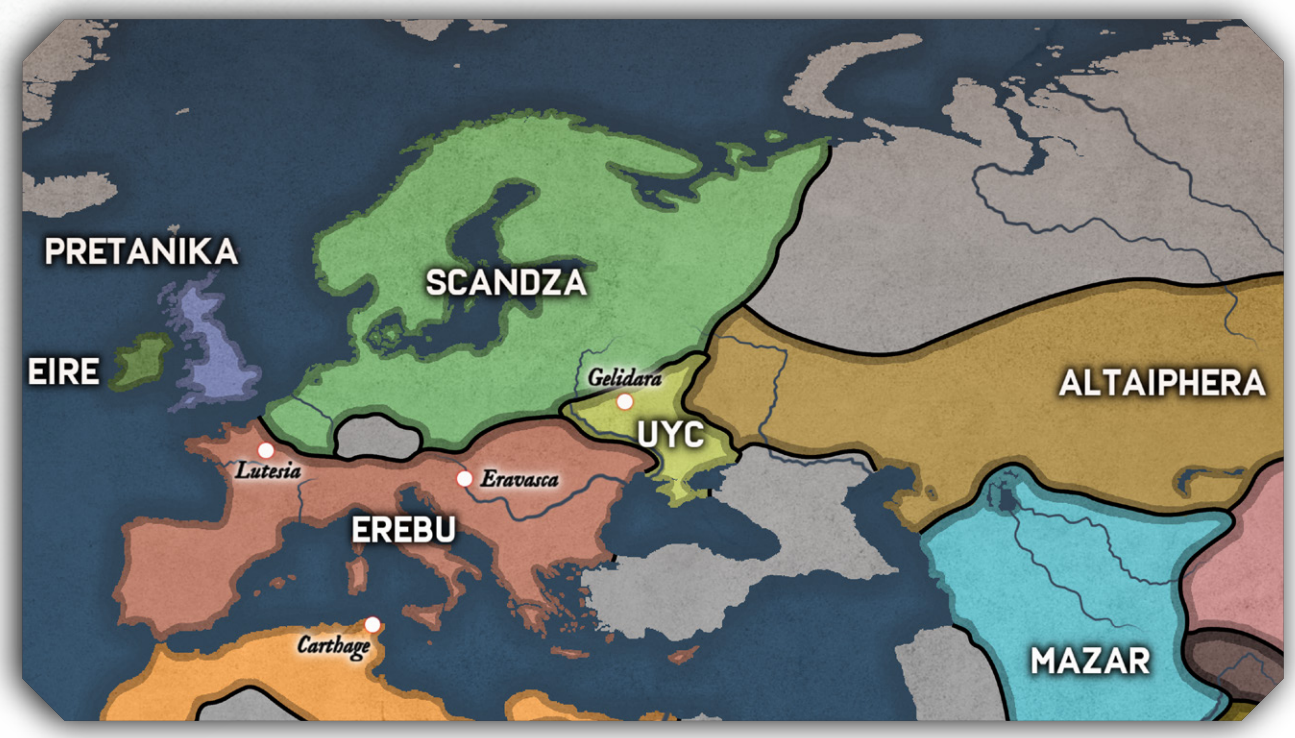
Concern over the Bloody Claw's imminent victory and fear for their future plans led to an alliance of the remainder of the Erebuan and Scandzan armies with countries across the world. Leading the counter attack was Neo Babylon. For the first time since the Shattering, legions of battlemages went to war. Fire and lightning rained from the sky, while arcane shields provided cover for Neo Babylon's elite Gunmages to use their magical artifices to blast the enemy. While the full force of Babylonian magic turned the tides of many battles, the war was ultimately won by the developing industry of Neo Babylon, producing armored vehicles and sophisticated nonmagical weapons for Neo Babylon's allies. After six harsh years of war, with new magics and technologies brought to bear, massive destruction to cities and infrastructure, and vast numbers of dead on both sides, the Bloody Claw was finally defeated.

Neo Babylon's role in winning the Wars of Scars expanded their influence on the world stage. Under the banner of unity, Neo Babylon expanded the old agreements under the Storm Treaties to standardize rules for trade and help nations rebuild and modernize in exchange for greater Neo Babylonian access to their markets and adoption of aspects of Neo Babylonian law. On the back of these investments, pro-Babylonian factions gained power in many nations, with many foreign cities becoming increasingly welcome to Neo Babylonian business interests. Nowhere was this more true than the city of Dakar in Senekemet, soon earning the moniker of "Gateway to Neo Babylon." Soon, many Neo Babylonian corporations had as much presence in Dakar as Neo Babylon itself—a trend that's led to growing tensions as many corporations seek leverage to throw off the oversight of the Ukkim and the arcane colleges.

As Neo Babylon's population boomed, Neo Babylon annexed many nearby settlements. Hamsu, Baytown, Willam, the Silver Coast, Le Sanctuaire, and the area between them, became part of the growing sprawl of Neo Babylon.

DISCONTENT ON AZORE

When explorers from Erebu first arrived, Azore was already populated. Even as they began to settle, it was some time before Neo Babylon became aware of the most powerful of these countries. Far to the



South and West of Neo Babylon, across the spines of Tiamat, and in a deep and beautiful valley, was a largely elven civilization. They called their land Val Broceliande, clearly an homage to the forest kingdom that had been destroyed by Alexander's forces over two millennia ago. Who these people were and what their connection was to that ancient elven kingdom was unknown.

To the north of Neo Babylon was the city-state of Acape Anya. Its people, called the Chaldani, who claimed to be native to Azore, had since welcomed Nýfirar, North Atlantican, and Babylonian immigrants into their midst. Acape Anya's population swelled with refugees and defectors during the Duendes uprising, and modern Chaldani culture reflects the varied people that make up Acape Anya.

Much further South, along the East coast, is Kuujitt, a Senekemetian settlement that grew into a nation of its own. Along Azore's West Coast, there is a majority-orc nation called Tulko, founded shortly after the shattering by Ghassulian colonists fleeing the devastation of their homeland during the shattering. Finally, on the Southernmost tip of Azore was Churuq, a civilization founded by Sunabán goblins, drawn from Erebu, Africa, and South Atlantica. In time, trade relations were normalized between and among most of these groups and Neo Babylon, and although each was somewhat insular, none kept closed borders.

While Azore largely maintained the peace throughout the Duendes insurrections and Wars of Scars, in many cases becoming a refuge for those fleeing the conflicts, by 2568 BR tensions were rising in Val Broceliande. A subset of the population with fae heritage (an inheritable mystical trait that among other effects, grants the ability to recognize other fae on sight) began to protest what they saw as the erasure and degradation of their unique culture—despite their claims that this culture underlay the prosperity of Val Broceliande that others took advantage of. Demanding legal recognition and codifications of core elements of fae culture in the Val Broceliande legal system, these protests were the largest among elven populations in known history. Authorities in Val Broceliande suppressed the protests, but the seeds were planted for the faction known as the Enkeura to come to power in the next century.

THE FIRST FAIRY WAR

Some 57 years later, in 2625 BR, the Enkeura (Elvish for "The Renewers") infiltrated the politics of Tulko (their neighbor to the North), inciting the Tulkans against the leadership of Val Broceliande. Tulko had generally seen Val Broceliande as snobbish and ungrateful for their support, and the elven nation had done little to prove them wrong. While Tulko had little affinity to the fae cause, with a vanishingly small proportion of fae living there, their enmity for the ruling class of Val Broceliande (fanned by Enkeura agitators) led them to make common cause with the Enkeura.

In 2632, the Enkeura convinced Tulko to invade Car Boedrein, a nearby city in Val Broceliande, taking them completely off guard. This was the beginning of what would be called the First Fairy War, or in the Elvish language, the Satyawe, the War of Separation. Within two months, the Enkeura had pressed South all the way to Val Broceliande proper where they completed a coup. The mostly non-fae leadership of Val Broceliande fled into exile in Santso.

Once Enkeura and Tulkan forces secured the rest of the country, they moved South into Churuq, who had accepted retreating armies loyal to the exiled leadership of Val Broceliande. With the stability of Azore as a whole threatened, in 2633, Neo Babylon, Acape Anya, Kuujitt, Churuq, and the government of Val Broceliande in exile, formed the Alliance of Azore (AoA) to stop the Enkeura. The war quickly devolved into a brutal stalemate, as the Enkeuran forces skillfully wielded magic in ways that surprised even the Neo Babylonian armies, and soon both sides were losing thousands of soldiers a day while the fronts remained largely static.

The stalemate was ultimately broken by the intercession of the Sunabáns in 2635, who engaged in a campaign on behalf of Churuq to regain their occupied territory. While the Sunabáns refused to press further into Val Brocelliande, their presence stopped the Enkeura and contained them to Val Brocelliande and Tulko.

THE SECOND FAIRY WAR

By 2636, it was clear to the people of Tulko they had been used. Under the cover of martial law during the war, the Enkeura seized complete control of the Tulko government, and their rule, as well as over the non-fae elves, was brutal and bitter. While Val Broceliande's land grew wilder, it also grew more inhospitable to those without that all-important fae heritage.

Meanwhile, the government of Val Broceliande in exile had not been idle in the years since the coup. They made alliances with Santso, Churuq, and the rest of the AoA, and they coordinated a network of spies and partisans across Val Brocelliande and Tulko, fueled by the Enkeura's increasing tyranny over the non-fae. Many Elven supremacists who had initially supported the Enkeura became disillusioned with the new leadership, as non-fae elves were treated just as poorly as the elves had treated the Tulkans.

The largest of these bitter factions, led by the sorcier general Adelante, took her Valkyr Company and defected to the government in exile, deeply resentful that fae orcs and dwarves were receiving land and titles while she was ignored.

The defection of the Valkyrs was a pivotal point for the exiles, and they made their move. Early in 2638, the Government in Exile, along with the Valkyrs and the Alliance of Azore, formed a task force to restore Val Broceliande to its prior leadership. After nearly two years of intense, small-scale battles, the war finally ended in 2639, with the surviving Enkeura abandoning the Grand Palace and fleeing for parts unknown. They have yet to be brought to justice. Those who fought for the Enkeura were pardoned, but the Valkyr Company was dismantled for being too brutal and clinging to prejudiced beliefs that were unacceptable to the Alliance of Azore and leadership of Val Broceliande (at least publicly). "Stability" returned to Azore, and to Neo Baylon.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

The strain of these wars on the supply of mages—either recruited as battlemages for the front or running the artifices and infrastructure of the war effort, led to increased investment in mundane technologies for facilitating basic tasks.

Even as these changes shifted the apparent supremacy of arcane magic, as factories replaced arcane forges, and refineries replaced alchemists, very little appeared to change in the social contract for most people's lives. The continued supremacy of a powerful elite fueled in many a sense of hopelessness for those who hunger for a more just world, a feeling the Ukkim, Corporations, and other elites seeking to supplant them are happy to fuel. But despite their dominance, cracks have begun to show in their world, and people have begun to see how far those cracks might go.

THE GREAT STRIKE

The first mistake the Ukkim and their allies made was complacency. As they created larger and larger empires of wealth and technology, they quickly found their influence expanding far beyond what they could enforce with their personal arcane power, formidable as it may be. Factories and offices arose and greedily sucked billions of people in as workers for their empire, offering a simple path (and often the only clear path) towards a modicum of financial security and comfort. Soon after the creation of this corporate behemoth, the Ukkim could not live without it. After centuries of luxury and power being a product of the great mages, suddenly they were as dependent on the system as anyone else. This fundamental shift in power caught the Ukkim off guard. Though they controlled the systems of power—the corporations, the guilds, the Lawjacks, the purgatoriums, the financial systems, the priesthood, the magic—these systems were heavily skewed to serving the Ukkim and upholding the status quo, with little of the wealth of Neo Babylon trickling down from the rarified elite. But just as tensions were ramping up across Azore which would result in the Fairy Wars, tensions of a different sort were stirring in Neo Babylon as well.

THE UKKIM DIDN'T CLEAN THESE STREETS
THE UKKIM DIDN'T GROW THIS FOOD
Workers Create Wealth the Ukkim Hoard it!
Workers create Wealth the Ukkim Hoard it!
The Ukkim DIDN'T Make these CLOTHES!

It's unknown who organized the great strike in 2595 BR, or if any one person or group organized it all, but the demand was clear—communities felt ignored by the Ukkim and the corporations and demanded a right to be represented by their own people instead of the distant Ukkim they'd never meet, living a life of luxury they couldn't imagine. In response to their demands, the Ukkim threatened to withhold the luxuries, the utilities, the magical support the people had grown accustomed to, promising an impoverished society without them. In response, workers staged a general strike. In hours, the city went dark and the factories of wonder ceased production. The powerful found themselves with no one to produce their food, let alone anyone to prepare, serve, or deliver it. As the days went on, it became more and more clear that the Ukkim could no longer hold up the weight of civilization on their own (if they ever could). Frightened for the first time, the elite of Neo Babylon saw their grand illusion coming down around them. Before the illusion could fully crumble, they offered a single concession to the people's demands: Envoys.

THE ENVOY MOVEMENT

While the idea was conceived by the strikers, as implemented by the Ukkim, Envoys were the simplest answer to the demands of the Great Strike with as little true concession as possible. If a community had a problem, they could select a group of representatives for the community to speak for them and petition for their problem to be solved. As envisioned by the Ukkim, Envoys would present an issue to the Ukkim, who would assure them that the problem could be solved and diffuse the situation. The Ukkim happily endorsed the Envoy movement, slathering it with over-the-top praise and explaining how Envoys would be empowered to represent their communities, granting them a handful of privileges and rights that would be respected by the law, and ideally, for the Ukkim, acting as a buffer between themselves and the angry mobs. When things went right, the Ukkim could take credit. When things went poorly, blame it on corrupt Envoys.

At first, Envoys acted as expected—beseeching the Ukkim to fix specific problems. And at first, the Ukkim made a big deal of fixing those problems—but as time passed, solutions slowly curdled to excuses, and it seemed that with the strike dissolved, the status quo would return.

But something unexpected happened. Envoys stopped asking the Ukkim to solve their problems—and started reaching out to other Envoys for help. Petitioning the Ukkim quickly shifted from the core duty of Envoys to a trivial formality, and communities began choosing Envoys for their problem solving abilities rather than their Ukkim-flattering ones. Officially, nothing changed— but unofficially, it began to feel like everything was changing.

The powers that be have treaded carefully around the Envoy movement. The official deference offered to them in the beginning still carries some official force, and claiming "Envoy business" is enough to avoid hassling as long as Envoys avoid outright criminal behavior (or avoid being caught, at least). In boardrooms and parties across the upper city, the rich and powerful assure themselves that the Envoys cannot possibly live up to the expectations put upon them, and they will eventually collapse in a tempest of disappointment and infighting. The most optimistic of the Ukkim guessed the Envoy movement would remain significant for at most a decade. That was fifty-five years ago.

The challenges they identify are real, of course. Many communities have serious problems, and the resources readily available feel insufficient to meet their needs. Each Envoy has their own opinion on how the world works and how to change it, and among the Envoys, ideological blocs have emerged, pushing for their (obviously correct) worldview at the expense of those of others. Some of this is fueled by Ukkim agitators, but much of it is simply the nature of diversity.

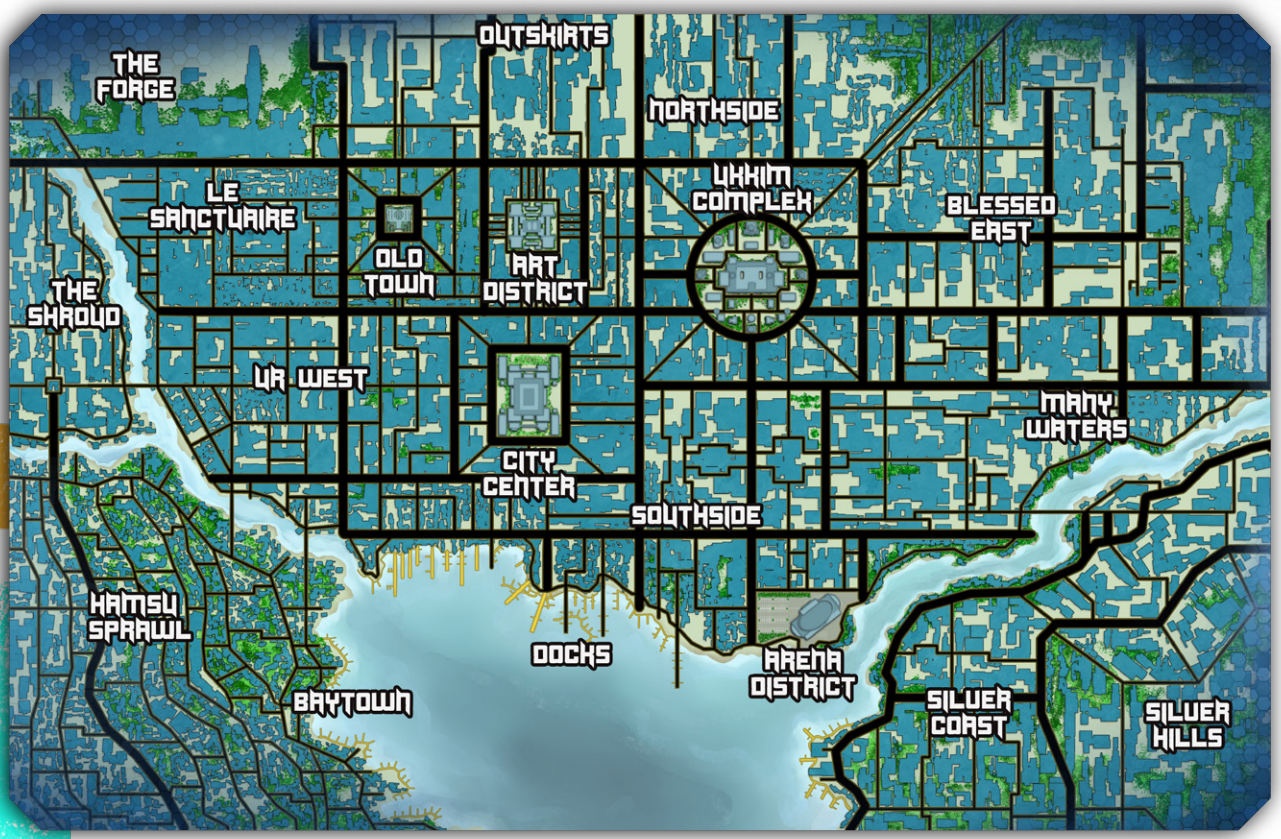
Nonetheless, it's been over five decades, and new Envoys are inducted every day, each hoping to solve the problems of their community.

The City of Neo Babylon

Ah, Neo Babylon. City of dreams and dreamers. City where anything is possible. Where you can get a Kemetian spiced latte and a frostypuff at three in the morning and read all 800 issues of the mythic heroes luminovels on your halo. You can find your soulmate, start a business, and resolve to be your best self, then make it happen. But it's also the city that kills prophets, enforces strict economic segregation, and funnels all the wealth to an elite few.

When the city was chartered in the year 2200 BR, 450 years ago, nobody had any idea what it would become. Born of a proposal by mages across nations, Neo Babylon was built with resources and commitments from the major nations at the time, expecting it to be a minor but useful trade hub, center of arcane learning, base from which to colonize and exploit Azore, and a ceremonial lip service to unity. Neo Babylon quickly exceeded those modest expectations. By combining the rich natural resources of Azore and quickly monopolizing all of the most talented mages in the world, Neo Babylon became a place of wonder, and hence a favored destination for the rich and powerful, first for vacations, but soon for investments, banking, and production. Magical knowledge, capital, and talent all flooded Neo Babylon, and it wasn't long until Neo Babylon was no mere hub for commerce, but the center of the world market, protected by it's transnational origins and deep web of economic, social, and political ties to the major nations of the time—and soon it's own arcane empowered security forces. As the world's elite were increasingly drawn into Neo Babylon's gravity, it became unclear whether the Ukkim council was reflecting the joint will of the world's leaders or creating it.

Neo Babylon has evolved into a technical marvel, an arcane wonderland, a place of pilgrimage, a consumerist's dream, and a corporate haven. Its rulers, as well as its people, face any number of challenges, most from within. Who knows what the city will look like in the future, but for now, everyone is trying to carve out their own piece of it.



DISTRICTS OF NEO BABYLON

When the city of Neo Babylon was founded 450 years ago, there was little more than the mage colleges and a village of support staff that served them. But as more immigrants found their way to Azore, and trade, commerce, and exports became as important as arcane research, the village became a thriving city. Once the Great Ziggurat was built, and pilgrims began to visit and stay, Neo Babylon became a thriving religious center as well. The first true division of the city came after the flood, when the new city was rebuilt over the ruins of the old and the Overcity and Undercity drew a stark distinction between the citizens of each. Hundreds of years later, after the War of Scars, with refugees flooding into the now bustling metropolis, space became limited in the city. Needing more room, and desiring more resources, Neo Babylon implemented their "municipal amalgamation," or forced annexation, of the surrounding settlements of Hamsu, Baytown, Willam, Silver Coast, and Le Sanctuaire, and the unincorporated areas between them.

Each district has its particular feel and demographics, but don't be surprised to find a corporate headquarters in the Arts District, a prominent factory in the Hamsu Sprawl, or a major Temple in a predominantly industrial area.

Ukkim Complex

The heart of Neo Babylon is vast, but not exclusively dedicated to the Ukkim Council. Although government operation takes up most of the space and activity in the district, housing, food service, military complexes, and of course the original six mage colleges, contribute to the bustle of the city's hearts.

The Ukkim Council, their twelve divisions, the governmental support staff, the higher Baru priesthood, the military bureaucracy, and the lawjack hierarchy all operate out of the Great Ziggurat in the center of the district. The six mages colleges, Mana, Force, Light, Alchemical, Storm, and Fire, each have their own towers and campuses that surround the Ziggurat.

Arts District

Sometimes also called by its older name, Fresco Center, the Arts District is known for its concentration of museums and art galleries. More popular artists are given space to work and exhibit in the central galleries, while up and coming or less talented artists must make do with higher rents, no sponsors, and less attractive galleries along the margins of the district. The Birmu School of Fine Arts and the Hana void monastery are popular places to visit.

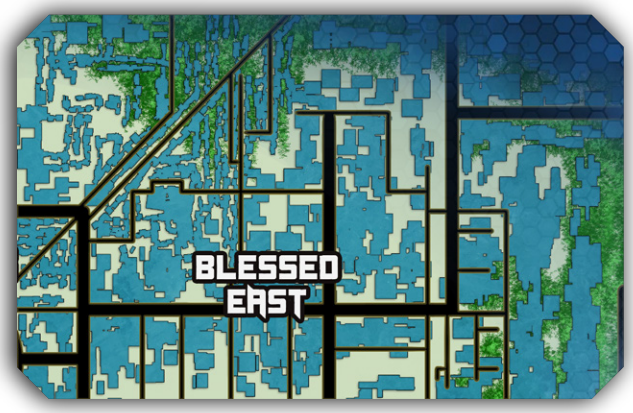
Baytown

Nestled along the West side of Neo Babylon's bay, Baytown is full of busy waterfronts, fishing operations, supplementary shipping industry, and no small amount of shady dealings. Small time industry leaders, old magic families, and organized crime families run the ship here.

Willam and Tebu were smaller villages which were subsumed into Baytown when they were annexed by Neo Babylon.

Blessed East

One of the safer and more influential districts. Blessed East is a mix of upper-middle and elite castes. It's a well-policed area that is considered a very "Neo Babylon" place to live. When you see the travel brochures for Neo Babylon, the happy families in the pictures would live here.



City Center

The economic epicenter of Neo Babylon is a cosmopolitan district where commerce thrives, banking towers pierce the sky, and diverse cultural enclaves contribute to a tapestry of urban life. Banking institutions dominate the streets, blending seamlessly with high-end boutiques and upscale restaurants. The air hums with the energy of financial transactions as professionals navigate the crowded sidewalks, their faces illuminated by the glow of digital displays. The district's heart pulses with the rhythm of business, where deals are brokered in the shadows of towering office buildings.

Amid the gleaming towers, subdistricts like Little Dakar, Sunabátown, New Scandza, and Linli contribute to the cultural mosaic of City Center. Little Dakar is a vibrant hub of West African culture, its streets filled with the aromas of spicy cuisine and the rhythmic beats of traditional music. Sunabátown, an electronic mecca for goblinkind, pulses with the energy of nightclubs and techno-fueled gatherings, where neon lights and digital art installations define the nightlife.

New Scandza, a Nordic-inspired enclave, adds a touch of minimalist elegance to the district. Scandzan design influences architecture, and quaint cafes offer Nordic delicacies, providing a tranquil retreat amid the urban hustle. Linli, an Asian-influenced district, showcases bustling markets, temples, and innovative technology hubs, where traditional and cutting-edge elements coexist.

The streets of City Center are alive with a constant flow of people from diverse backgrounds, creating a global marketplace of ideas and commerce. The district's public spaces host cultural events, from art exhibitions to street performances, fostering a sense of community amid the towering structures of economic power. City Center embodies the harmonious blend of commerce and culture that defines Neo Babylon, where the pulse of the city is felt in every transaction and celebrated in every cultural enclave.

Docks

The Docks bustle with frenetic energy as massive cargo ships unload their payloads beneath towering cranes and flickering holographic signs. There is always a symphony of clanging metal, hissing steam, backing automated loaders, and dock workers with corp leased cyberware. At night, once the guilds pack it in for the evening, organized crime makes its presence known as smugglers and drugrunners make use of the docks that lawjacks have been paid not to patrol.

The Forge

A high-tech industry zone full of waste-spewing factories, focused on cybertech and other emerging technological research. A stark, lifeless, high-tech area, out of the way of larger residential zones just in case things go wrong.

Hamsu Sprawl

A sprawling labyrinth of makeshift dwellings and dilapidated structures that house the disenfranchised lower caste workers struggling to eke out a living. Nearly devoid of law enforcement, this impoverished enclave operates on the fringes of Neo Babylon, where desperation and resilience intermingle in a daily struggle for survival.

Le Sanctuaire

Originally founded by elves fleeing the Duendes uprising in Erebu, this district is renowned for its rich cultural tapestry and vibrant atmosphere. Known as the heart of joie jazz, its streets come alive with the sounds of music during lively festivals. The city's unique architecture, characterized by wrought-iron balconies and colorful townhouses, adds to its distinctive charm. With a diverse culinary scene, historic neighborhoods like Sappir Village, and a pervasive sense of celebration, Le Sanctuaire captivates visitors with its blend of history, music, and exuberant enjoyment of life.

Many Waters

Named for the ambient hum of generators, this district is predominantly a functional district with a vibrant working-class community. Adjacent to the power plants, it offers affordable housing, but lacks the allure of more upscale neighborhoods, making it a practical, if less desirable, choice for those who can't afford to live away from the constant thrum of industrial activity. Despite its utilitarian character, the people of Many Waters thrive as a solid, stable, middle-caste community, contributing to the city's energy infrastructure, taking pride in work without neglect or decay.

Northside

The Citadel, the imposing home of the Battlemages and Gunmages, towers above the barracks, training grounds, and airfields of Northside, lending the district an air of authority—though a closer look reveals that many of the barracks and training bases are abandoned and beginning to be reclaimed by the surrounding wilderness, vestiges of Northside's height at the peak of the Faerie Wars.

In addition to the Ukkim's military, Northside also houses the Agade Airfield, the primary airport for Neo Babylon, as well as Lawjack Air Command, where they house the VTOLs holding the most elite Secure Response Teams ready to respond to any disturbances of the peace that the local Lawjack outposts can't deal with.

Old Town

Old Town stands as an homage to ancient Babylon, and serves as the center of Neo Babylon's tourism industry. Old Town wraps around a meticulous recreation of ancient Babylon, offering visitors a captivating journey through time amid the city's modern landscape. Stone streets wind through the heart of the district, bordered by intricately designed structures that mirror the grandeur of the historical Babylonian era under Nebuchadnezzar II. Tourists wander beneath archways adorned with ancient symbols, immersed in the fusion of the past and the future.

The tourist area of Old Town is a sensory delight, with vibrant market stalls lining the thoroughfares, offering an array of artifacts, traditional crafts, and holographic souvenirs. Street performers, clad in historical attire, bring the ancient world to life with captivating performances, while the air resonates with the melodic tunes of traditional instruments intermingling with the distant hum of traffic.

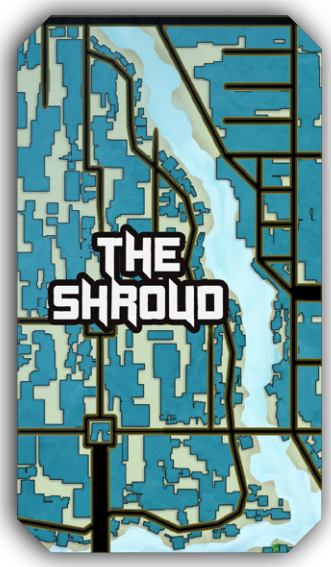
Outskirts

Going north from Neo Babylon, the urban sprawl yields to scattered warehouses and light industry, then junkyards of rusted vehicles and broken down appliances, and finally to open spaces. The Outskirts reveal a mosaic of mountains, hills, and woodlands, providing a dramatic contrast to the bustling, artificial environment within the city limits.

The Shroud

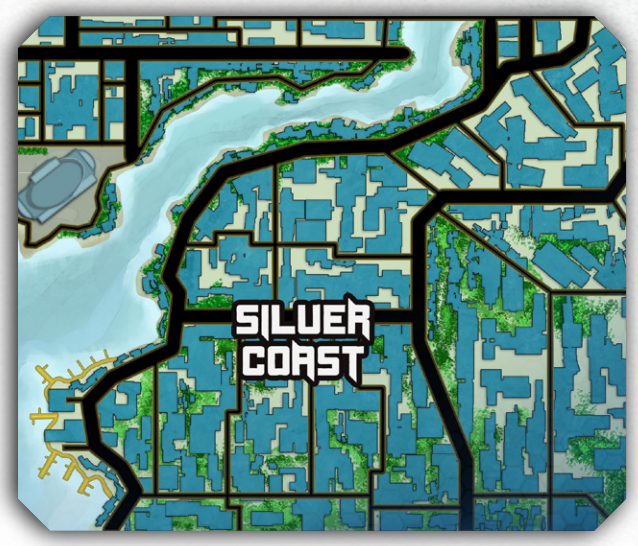
The Shroud, once an up and coming second financial sector for Neo Babylon, now bears the scars of a monarch dragon attack that left its skyline marred and its streets in disarray. In the aftermath, the district fell under the control of ruthless Bravia families who exploited the chaos. Buildings, once majestic, now stand in various states of ruin, with the lingering scent of charred remnants serving as a constant reminder of the destructive force that crushed it.

The gangsters have transformed The Shroud into a shadowy underworld, where narrow alleys and dilapidated structures provide cover for illicit activities. Graffiti and symbols of gang affiliations mark territories, while the inhabitants navigate a city that operates under a tense and oppressive atmosphere.



Silver Coast

An upper-caste enclave along the East coast of Neo Babylon's bay, Silver Coast shines as a gleaming testament to opulence and high-tech luxury with towering skyscrapers adorned with shimmering chrome and constantly remodeled to conform to ever-changing styles and tastes. Imposing corporate headquarters and elite residences create a facade of importance along the pristine, sanitized coastline.



Silver Hills

Just behind the Silver Coast, this elite playground of luxurious estates, each a marvel of modern architecture, overlooks the perfect, artificial beaches that stretch along the coastline. Palm trees, gaslight, and gaudy neon create an imperfect patchwork of individualized paradises subject to the whim of the unfairly wealthy. The air is filled with the distant hum of private hovercraft and the soft chime of exclusive clubs, where the city's elite gather to discuss business and indulge in decadent pleasures.

Private security drones, adorned with sleek chrome exteriors, patrol the streets, ensuring the exclusivity of the enclave. The streets are pristine, lined with designer boutiques, upscale restaurants, and futuristic art installations that reflect the wealth and cultural refinement of the upper caste.

Southside

Sitting between the bustling docks and the towering structures of the Ukkim Complex, this district is a cacophony of contrasts, where the industrial heartbeat of the docks blends seamlessly with the neon-lit extravagance of the downtown skyline. In the southeast corner of Southside lies an arena district, an electrifying hub where the city's passions and conflicts converge. Massive holographic billboards announce upcoming pukku games, drone races, yojin competitions, and other spectacles.

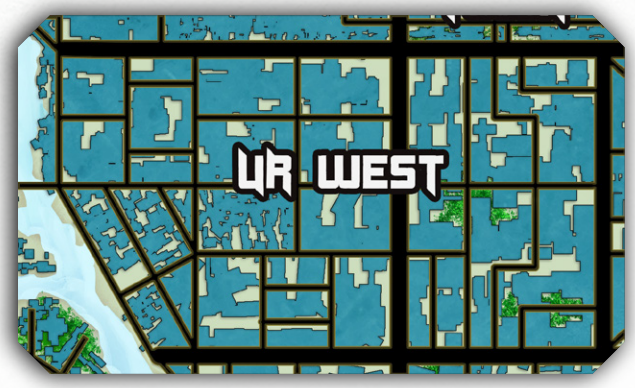
Undercity

The original city of Neo Babylon, it was built over and forgotten after the Great Flood of 289. Now, this subterranean realm pulses with the violence of rival factions vying for dominance. The Undercity is a gritty battleground, where technology in decay covers alleys and abandoned tunnels. The entire district, even if not official, serves as an arena for gang conflict and illicit activities. Factions maneuver through the shadows where the law refuses to tread, fighting over resources, protecting their communities, and creating a treacherous ecosystem where only the hardest survive.

Ur West

Filling in the gaps between Neo Babylon and the districts it acquired, Ur West grew up without a purpose, and so it pulsates with a chaotic fusion of new technology and cultural ambivalence. Towering skyscrapers adorned with holographic projections cast shadows over the crowded streets, where neon signs flicker amidst the ever-present drizzle, creating an otherworldly ambiance.

The district is a labyrinth of narrow alleys and bustling markets where street vendors peddle a mix of the latest consumer electronics, magical artifices, fashion and cuisine.



LIFE IN NEO BABYLON

Governance in Neo Babylon

Neo Babylon is run by the Ukkim. The Ukkim are a council of sixty, elected to their positions by a complex set of councils and electors from the Colleges of Magic. Historically, each Ukkim was responsible for representing the twelve founding populations, furthering Neo Babylon's local interests, or ensuring that magic was responsible for a specific set of magical tasks (such that the Ukkim of Transportation had responsibility of ensuring the powering of the magical barges, while the Ukkim of Defense was responsible for training and overseeing the battlemages and gunmages). Even as the primacy of magic fades in Neo Babylon, the structure of the Ukkim remains, each maintaining their own domain of influence, from which they set priorities, spend money, and set the penalties for violations of their edicts. While their true reach is obscured behind bureaucracy, shell corporations, and back-room deals, in reality, almost every facet of society and the economy bear the marks of Ukkim influence.

Magic in Neo Babylon

Arcane Magic was the key driver of Neo Babylon's rise to global hegemon. Neo Babylon possesses more arcane practitioners than any other nation, and nearly all of the most skilled mages reside in Neo Babylon. While Babylon of old wielded magic as a cudgel, burning through their enemies and rending their weapons into useless toys, Neo Babylon has spent the last 400 years using magic to build power through gifts and diplomacy.

Neo Babylon triumphantly proclaims the success of its cosmopolitan city experiment while carefully guarding its arcane secrets with as much care as it generously gifts its benefits. While many mages derive value from selling their services on the free market, the Ukkim's hold on power derives from the Levy, a tax on all commerce in Neo Babylon. Originally instituted to pay the mages of Neo Babylon to support the magical infrastructure of Neo Babylon, as Neo Babylon's population and wealth exploded and tech reduced the dependence of Neo Babylon on magic, the Ukkim use the levee to pay for the governance of Neo Babylon—including the Arcane Colleges and much of their lifestyle under the guise of their roles as leaders.

The Storm Treaties

The Levy doesn't end at the boundaries of Neo Babylon. Since the Shattering, mana storms have been an increasingly dangerous threat to civilizations around the world. Almost all countries in the world have negotiated treaties with Neo Babylon to provide for Storm Wardens, mages trained in dissipating mana storms, with the costs being paid with their own local Levies.

Over the centuries, these treaties expanded as magic played a larger role in the economy, with countries paying for alchemists to refine their goods, force mages to power their ships, and fire mages to fuel their forges. Through the Storm Treaties, Neo Babylon maintained control of its arcane knowledge while inducing most of the world to become dependent on its wonders. For the countries signing the Storm Treaties, signing was a necessity for prosperity, even as it involved paying tithes of their own labor and natural resources and often sacrificing their own ideas about society and governance to accommodate Neo Babylonian expectations. Just as in Neo Babylon, the nature of the Levy has shifted with the rise of increasingly powerful technology, and the Levy has become less about the supremacy of arcane magic and more a way for Neo Babylonian industry to assert itself in foreign nations.

The Arbiters of Marduk

While the Ukkim control the money taxed as part of the Levy and set the laws, these laws are judged by the Arbiters, Baru of Marduk who sit in judgment of those brought before them. The Arbiters pride themselves in upholding the rules to the letter, a reputation that earns them a begrudging degree of trust even when the laws they uphold seem primarily to benefit the Ukkim and their allies.

Money and Power

The most important thing to understand about Neo Babylon is that it runs on money, and specifically the Silver Shekel Standard, known colloquially as Stanz. Stanz are the currency of Neo Babylon and de facto global trade currency. Everything has a price—not just necessities, goods, and services, but also safety, freedom, and justice.

Credit or electronic money is preferred among most folks in Neo Babylon, transmitted via wireless halo transmissions. Actual Silver Shekel Standards do exist, but are rarely used, while the thin plastic "paper" Shekels are more common, mostly among the lower castes or criminals where electronic

transactions may be less feasible, secure, or desirable. The far less used option is fillable, pre-paid stan-stix which hold a predetermined amount of digital currency, which must be recycled or refilled at participating vendors to be of any further use.

The Cost of Justice

Stanz aren't just the currency of trade, however—it's also the currency of justice in Neo Babylon. All crimes in Neo Babylon, from public urination to murder, are punished by fines levied to provide restitution to their victims (as well as cover the costs of law enforcement and judgment). As long as the perpetrator can pay the fine, their debt is considered paid, and the crime is absolved in the eyes of the law. If they are unable to afford the fine, they are sentenced to forced labor in the purgatorium, where they work until their debts are absolved.

Unsurprisingly, this system falls heavily on the poor and lightly on the rich. Many minor crimes are all but flouted by the rich as a trivial cost of doing business, while zealous enforcement by lawjacks strains the resources of poorer communities (while lining the lawjack's pockets with goods manufactured in the purgatorium). Even being convicted of major crimes like murder is not guaranteed to bring down a sufficiently well resourced individual—even if they can't afford the judgment directly, organizations exist to extend loans to individuals with high earning potentials to allow them to continue to work outside of the purgatorium to pay off their debt.

For those without that benefit, working off debt in the purgatorium is often a long and brutal affair, with poor pay combined with harsh restrictions and rules, violations of which cause additional fines and judgments. Compliance is ensured by forcing purgatorium members to purchase their own food, necessities, and medical care from their own wages—for those unable or unwilling to work, the purgatorium becomes an all but certain death sentence.

The Lawjacks

After the War of Scars, Neo Babylon replaced the previous hodgepodge of policing and security services with the lawjacks—who by law are the only force permitted to use firearms and other lethal weapons. Under the motto "peace through order," Lawjacks are responsible for maintaining order in the Upper City, finding and fining those guilty of violating laws, and ensuring they either pay or are brought to the purgatorium (and earning a portion of the proceeds). While the bulk of the lawjack's duties relate to patrolling the city for potential criminals, lawjacks can also be hired by private individuals and corporations for security.

Technically accountable to the Ukkim and the Arbiters, lawjacks are given wide deference in their methods and targets as long as public order is maintained. Like most things in Neo Babylon, what this means depends on your caste—for the wealthy (especially those footing the bill for private lawjack security) this means protection from any intrusion into their opulent and well guarded life.

For the lower castes, the lawjacks rely on fear and impunity to uphold the order, wearing excessively heavy armor rendering them immune to any legal civilian weaponry, complete with golden face masks to present a faceless (and unaccountable) symbol of order and metal lined boots that make their presence clear to deter any potential criminals. Despite their monopoly on lethal force, lawjacks are seldom armed with firearms, instead preferring to use their signature stun batons. The reason for this is simple: dead and injured criminals don't earn as much as healthy, live ones.

Outside of Neo Babylon, the role of lawjacks varies. While only a handful of other nations rely on lawjacks for all domestic security and policing needs, many Neo Babylonian companies continue to rely

on lawjacks as private security as they travel abroad, and lawjacks are granted privileges as such in the vast majority of nations in the world. In major trade cities, it's not uncommon for special trade districts to be controlled by the lawjacks (upholding Neo Babylonian law), a dispensation given in an attempt to lure in more Neo Babylonian commerce.

The Cost of Living

For most in Neo Babylon, life is spent earning to survive. Living in Neo Babylon (at least outside the undercity) is expensive. Housing is tightly regulated, with even the smallest apartment costing almost as much as a low wage worker can make. Food, at least outside of the cheapest processed gruel that technically meets the nutritional requirements of its consumers, gets quickly expensive, and fresh food is considered a luxury. Almost everything in Neo Babylonian society is consumable, either by taste or design. Large purchases like vehicles are seldom owned, instead being leased from large corporate fleets. Even smaller purchases tend to be viewed as obsolete quickly, either due to changing fashion, technological obsolescence, or simply poor durability. Savings are rare—for the poorest as a simple matter of inability to save, but for others as a result of the inexorable logic of the Caste system.

Caste

The professed reason for the caste system is to provide an easy method to allow merchants and officials to determine the ability of individuals to pay when it comes to determining eligibility for housing, leases, and liability. To live legally in the uppercity of Neo Babylon, you must provide evidence of financial wherewithal, which is translated into a caste designation (those who cannot are relegated to the undercity). Almost all housing is segregated by caste, officially as a matter of liability and credit, though in practice as a way of enforcing segregation between the haves and have-nots.

More than housing, caste creeps into almost every aspect of Neo Babylonian life. High end venues and boutiques screen out low caste customers to maintain an atmosphere of exclusion. Many laws, under the guise of preventing people from incurring fines they could not pay, limit activities to those of a certain caste (for example, driving in Neo Babylon is limited to those of lower-middle caste or higher, and aircraft are limited to those of upper caste or above). Lawjacks use caste to determine who to detain immediately and who to merely issue a citation. More crucially, however, many jobs officially or unofficially are limited to those of a particular caste.

Caste determinations are based on a complex mix of factors, the primary determinant is managing high levels of consumption without accruing too much debt. Given the incentives to raise your caste, Babylonians are constantly incentivized to live at the edge of their means—an outcome that keeps most workers dependent on their next payday.

Technology

As the mages of Neo Babylon created more and more elaborate techniques to exploit their power, the significance of cybertech almost went unnoticed. During the Fairy Wars, the Ukkim pushed for more and more creative ways to leverage their magical might into advantages in combat, and as mages left the city to support the war effort, similar attempts at reducing the need for mages led to advances in civilian infrastructure. Slowly, a new set of technologies started to accomplish important functions without requiring the oversight of a mage.

Labeled cybertech, this technology made devices capable of running autonomously for days. These devices quickly exploded in their complexity and computational power, turning from simple motors and machines to devices capable of autonomously carrying goods between cities or nations, computers able to communicate with others across the globe, and even artificial body parts able to restore the function of missing limbs (and in many cases surpass the originals). The Ukkim, who had funded the original research for this technology were caught in a bind—these miraculous devices weakened their hold on the world, in many cases obviating the need to hire a mage to accomplish the various needs of civilization. On the other hand, these inventions represented a new, exciting form of power and prosperity—which they (for now, at least) controlled. Afraid that ignoring this technology would instead lead it to flourish elsewhere, the Ukkim began issuing charters for new corporations to develop and exploit these new technologies.

The explosion of corporations innovating in cybertech within the last hundred years has rendered the world unrecognizable. The days of sailing ships gliding across the sea under the perfect winds of a force mage have been replaced with cybertech jets—alchemical shops carefully synthesizing potions have been replaced with industrial scale pharmaceutical factories creating the same compounds at a much vaster scale. Despite all the visible change though, little has changed in who controls the world—while the rise of cybertech has led to a new class of corporate elite, any conflicts they have with the Ukkim have been largely invisible to those not carefully watching the elaborate push and pull between the Ukkim and corporations.

Halos

Nearly everyone, excepting the imprisoned and those shunning modern society, in Neo Babylon has a halo (Handheld Link Organizer). Halos are how people communicate at a distance, transfer money, look up information, organize their lives, prove their identity and caste, control other devices, and more.

See "Devices in the World" on page 52 for more details on halos and other computers in Neo Babylon.

Transportation

Neo Babylon is incredibly diverse when it comes to transport options. There are motorcycles, animals, cars, flying vehicles, flying creatures, magical devices, and the Neo Babylon Metro monorail system. Some monorail cars in Neo Babylon connect to rails both above and below the car. This is because these cars also dip into the Undercity at times, when they switch from above ground rails to rails that hang from the Skyfloor below. Metros check riders' H-ID when they enter the stations, when they embark, and when they exit railcars.

Vehicle ownership is rare in Neo Babylon, with almost all individuals leasing their vehicles (either as a financial necessity or a luxury allowing them to always have access to the most up to date models). Like most transactions in Neo Babylon, what is available is strongly limited by your caste—leasing anything but a single occupancy commuter bike is almost impossible for those of Lower Caste, while flying vehicles and creatures are limited to those of Upper and Elite castes.

Those in the Undercity have no restrictions on how they get around, because there is no law down there to enforce it, so you'll often see cars with monster wheels, unreliable flying vehicles, and all manner of animal riders. But there is no public transport, and of course, no legal way to travel to the upper city.

Pets and Pests

Wherever you visit in Neo Babylon, there are animals. Some, like horses, mushkushu, gryphons, opinici, pegasi, unicorns, camels, storm deer, etc. serve the purpose of carrying citizens to and fro—remnants from an earlier age that persist alternatively as an ostentatious display of wealth or an effort to avoid predatory leases on mechanized vehicles. Pets are similarly common in Neo Babylon, including dogs, cats, birds, b'eagles, parakitties, milai, and even more exotic beasts. All domesticated animals must be registered. If they are not, they are caught on sight and taken to animal control facilities colloquially called griffpounds.

Aside from domesticated animals, a vibrant urban ecosystem of scavengers exists, including rats, croyotes, and raccondors (all of which are generally considered pests).

Food

Until relatively recently, food has never been scarce in Neo Babylon. The Ukkim made sure everyone had enough to eat because with their arcane knowledge and ability, it was easy to produce and distribute. But as the city has grown, the Ukkim have delegated this responsibility to corporations. While technically the corporations fulfill their duty producing enough food (for the Overcity at least), this is only true if you count barely palatable nutrient gruel—for food with any amount of hedonic pleasure, you have to be prepared to pay.

Porridge is probably the most common dish in the world. Barley is the best known base, but rice, wheat, oats (oatmeal), corn, triticale, and buckwheat are also common—though valiant attempts to make the standard issue gruel palatable, and in some cases, exciting, drive many low caste porridge shops. Sweet and savory varieties are always available, and avant garde restaurants are always pushing the boundaries of ingredients, consistencies, and tastes (new forms of bitter, umami, and sour porridges aren't typical, but can be found).

Kebabs are in many ways just as important as porridge, but perhaps easier to manage (and thus more ubiquitous) in many situations, such as sporting events or when bowls and utensils aren't convenient.

Pretanika
Eire
Dragonhead
Luteria
Eravasca
Oceti Sakowin
Acape Anya
Acape Anya
Erebu
Azore
Neo Babylon
Carthage
Neo Babylon
Tulko
Val Broceliande
Val Broceliande
Kuujitt
Dakar
Senekemet
Churuq Lo
Santso
Sunabán Trade Empire
Churuq

Major & Moderate Nations & Powers

Recognized by Neo Babylon

Beyond Neo Babylon

On any given day, the world's headline news revolves around the happenings in Neo Babylon. It is the world's most influential city and culture, where magic, trade, and influence have their zenith, and not without reason. Despite what Neo Babylon would like you to think, however, other places in the world do exist, with thriving cultures and contributions all their own.

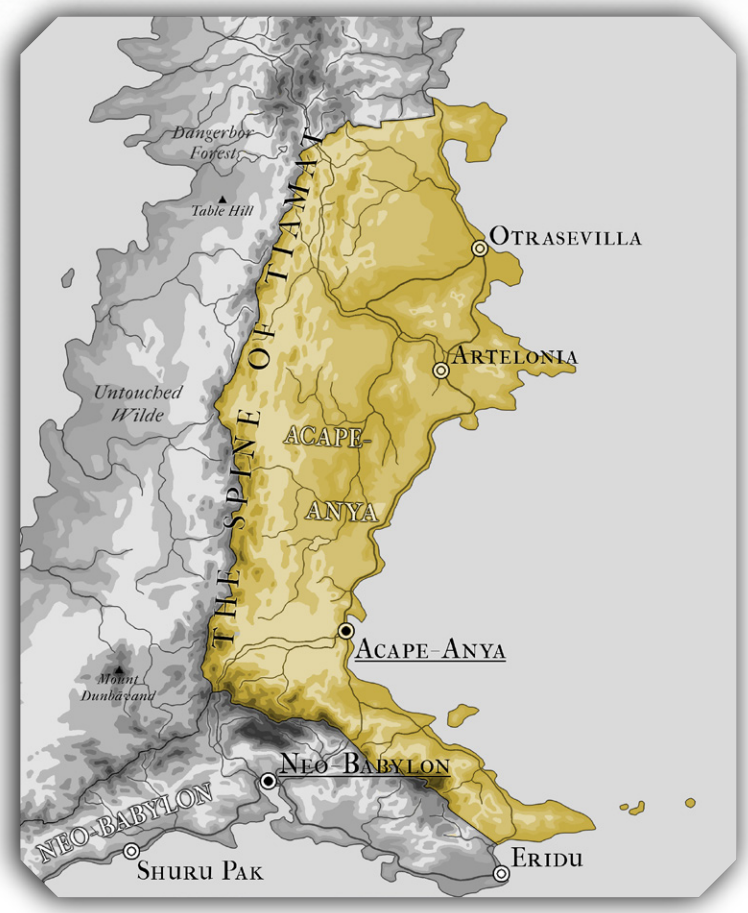
Azore

Acape Anya

The city-state of Acape Anya lies to the north of Neo Babylon, and in addition to the eponymous capital, boasts a beautiful, tranquil countryside quite in contrast to the sprawl of Neo Babylon. Originally one of the largest cities on Azore, the landscape of Acape Anya has been shaped by both its Chaldani roots and the subsequent influx of dwarven immigrants. The city is surrounded by rolling hills and lush greenery, with the Chaldani favoring an environment that reflects their appreciation for fine living. The architectural style in Acape Anya is known for its intricacy and rococo embellishments, mirroring the cultural fusion of Latin and Atlantican heritages. Its cities are dotted with vibrant neighborhoods, and their homes showcase the Chaldani's commitment to large, extended families and hospitality, evident in the open arms with which they welcomed dwarven settlers centuries ago.

The Chaldani claim to be the only human natives of Azore, and Neo Babylonian scholars support this claim. In the time since the discovery of Azore, however, the country has welcomed and embraced the cultures of immigrants from North Atlantica, Dragonhead, and those with Babylonian heritage as well. The history of Acape Anya is marked by encounters with new cultures, particularly the Duendes attacks that shook Erebu hundreds of years ago. As the Duendes swept through Azore, many Dwarves, predominantly from Iberia, abandoned their posts and found refuge in Acape Anya. This influx of dwarven immigrants transformed the Chaldani culture into a unique blend of Latin, Old Chaldani, and dwarven influences. Over time, tensions arose between Acape Anya and cities in Erebu, fueled by residual animosity from the Duendes era. The formation of the Erebuan Bravia, an organized crime syndicate rooted in Iberian nationalism, further complicated the city's relationship with its Erebuan neighbors.

In the present day, Acape Anya stands as a vibrant city with a rich cultural tapestry. The Chaldani people continue to embrace their heritage of extended families, hospitality, and a love for fine living. The city's language, Chaldani, is a melodic mix of Latin, Old Chaldani, and dwarven tongues. The cities of Otrasevilla and Artelonia to the north began as resort towns for wealthy Chaldani, but have since grown into their own, albeit still under the governance of Acape Anya. Acape Anya faces geopolitical challenges, particularly with the



growing power of the Bravia extending its influence from Iberia to Neo Babylon, and with Neo Babylon often forcing its own interests on their neighbors across Azore. Despite these challenges, Acape Anya remains a reliable partner to Neo Babylon, serving as a northern ally in the face of broader conflicts in Azore and beyond.

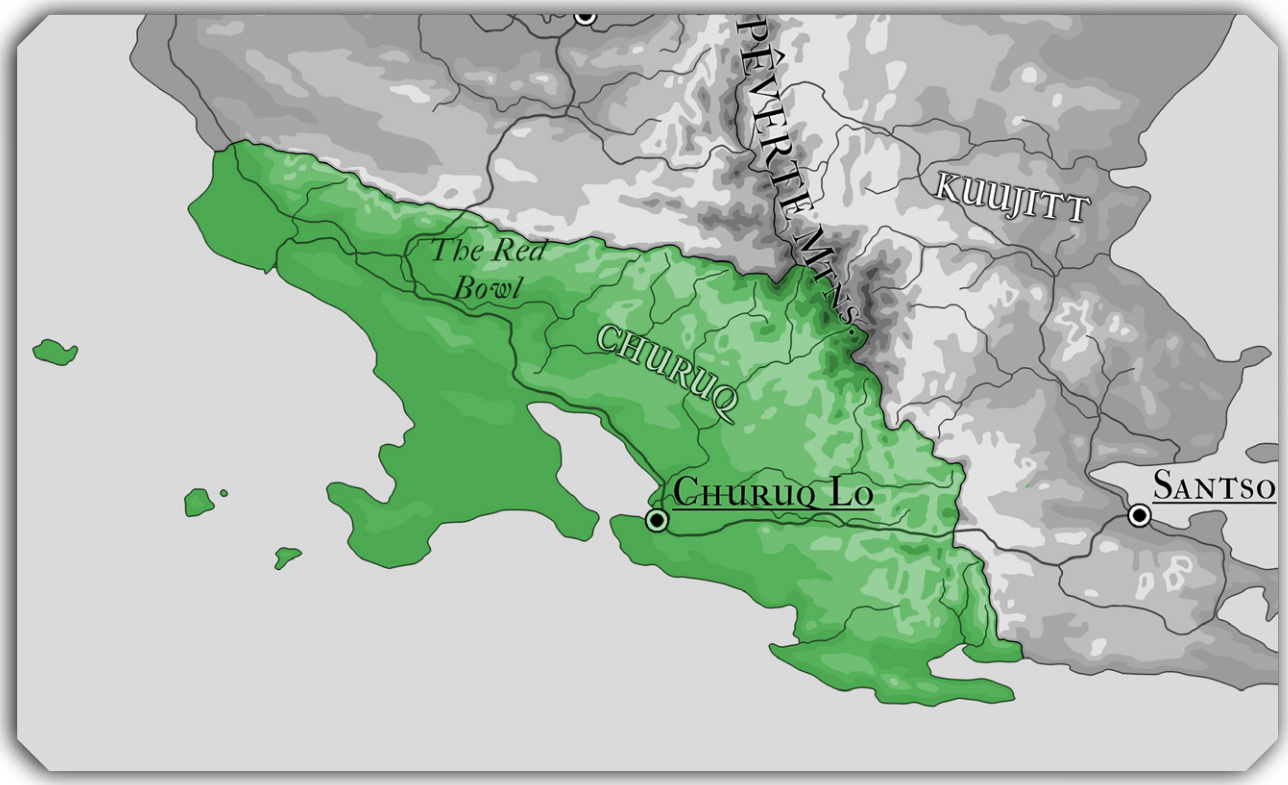
Acape Anya is ruled by a council of eleven selected for ten year terms by a random selection from a list of prominent (i.e. wealthy) citizens, with the council selecting from among their number a first councilor who serves as head of state. The most recent draw has drawn significant controversy as it's led to five members with known Bravian ties—leading many to worry that Acape Anya is on the edge of direct control by the Bravia.

Churuq

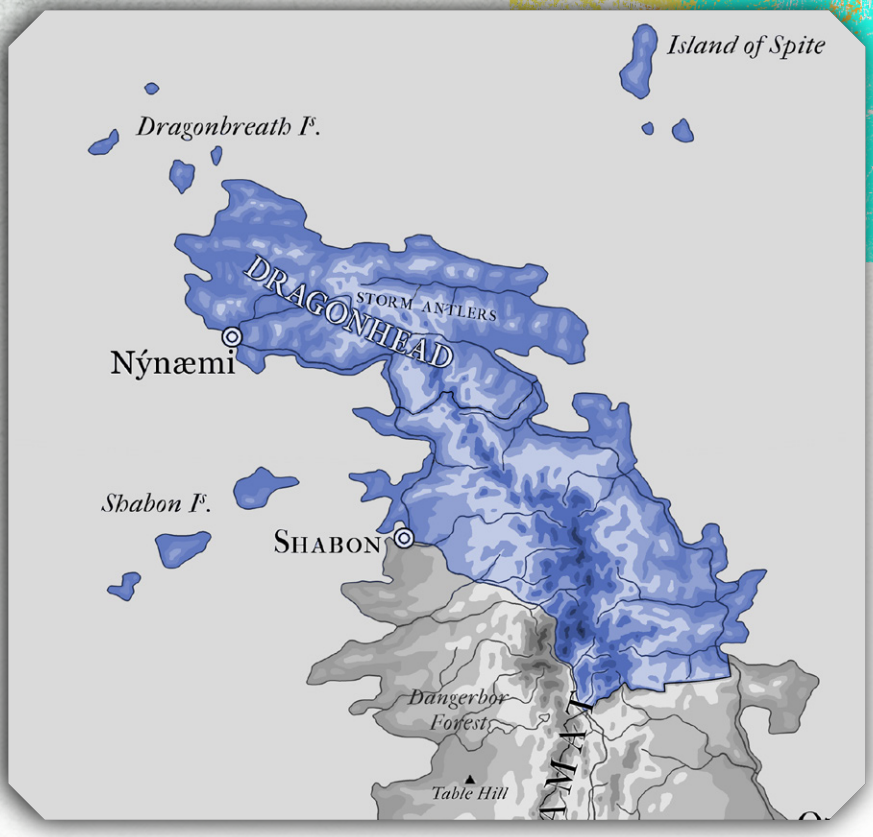
Far to the south of Neo Babylon, along Azore's south coast, Churuq is a nation predominantly of goblins and quite unlike most other regions, with Churuq-Lo as its capital. The goblin colonists from South Atlantica who founded Churuq established their civilization around an ancient tower they discovered that was bustling with magical energy. The compact nature of the buildings and rooms in Churuq reflects the small stature of most of its inhabitants, but also the pragmatic approach of its people. Unlike other regions, physical prowess is not highly valued in Churuq's culture, resulting in inhabitants generally being less muscular. The nation straddles the line between science and the arcane, drawing researchers, explorers, and innovators from all over Azore and South Atlantica. Churuq has become a hub of positive interactions with other nations, showcasing its adaptability and commitment to finding common ground.

Churuq's history is marked by a period of detachment from the surrounding regions, with individuals maintaining networks of acquaintances across the world through personal correspondence. Their preference for intellectual pursuits over physical ones shows in their emphasis on reading, learning, and cultural exchange. Churuq, once somewhat insular, found itself at the forefront of a conflict consuming Azore. During the recent Fairy Wars, Churuq faced a significant threat when the Enkeura forces moved south, prompting Neo Babylon, Acape Anya, Kuujitt, Churuq, and the government of Val Broceliande in exile to form the Alliance of Azore (AoA). The Alliance successfully halted the invasion, with unexpected aid from Sunabán forces from South Atlantica. Churuq's resilience and collaboration with other nations played a crucial role in repelling the invaders and restoring peace to the region.

Similar to, but more extreme than their sister nation Sunabá, Churuq is governed by Tujawa, absurdly weak regents who are something between beloved court jesters and ambassadors, all but powerless without the support of the peoples in various provinces. The Tujawa concern themselves mostly with pageantry and symbolism, but real power



belongs to whoever controls the purse strings. After the Fairy Wars, Churuq is teetering towards becoming a de facto military dictatorship with the majority of government spending concentrated in the hands of military kapitão, or high Marshall. Churuq's local governments reflect a commitment to a harmonious society where even non-goblin residents can participate in contributing to the greater whole. The local language, La-Churuq, with its lower register, glottal stops, and deliberate pace, reflects the distinctive speech patterns of the Churuqians, and makes it difficult for visitors to communicate easily. The cuisine of Churuq, characterized by its reliance on technique rather than specific ingredients, is often what visitors comment on most. Churuq's chocolatiers and vineyards producing the popular "goblin strangewine" are among the most prized delicacies, and very expensive since Churuq does not export them and they can only be purchased in Churuq itself.



DRAGONHEAD

Dragonhead, situated far to the north of Neo Babylon along Azore's icy north coast, is home to the Nýfirar people and boasts a rugged and picturesque landscape. The northernmost region on Azore, Dragonhead encompasses both the mainland and the Dragonbreath Islands, which all bear the Nýfirar fusion of Scandzan and North Atlantican cultures. The climate, characterized by cold winters and relatively cool summers, contributes to the harsh beauty of the land. The Dragon's Eye, a colossal lake adorned with submerged volcanic rock formations, serves as a captivating centerpiece, its surface mirroring the rocky depths below and creating the illusion of a colossal, multicolored eye. Governance and the largest population rest in the city of Nýnæmi.

The history of Dragonhead is deeply intertwined with the adventurous spirit of the Scandzan peoples, particularly Eiríkr Rauði and his banished followers. In 1585 BR, they happened upon Azore, intermingled with Northeastern Atlantican peoples, and founded Dragonhead on the northern coast.

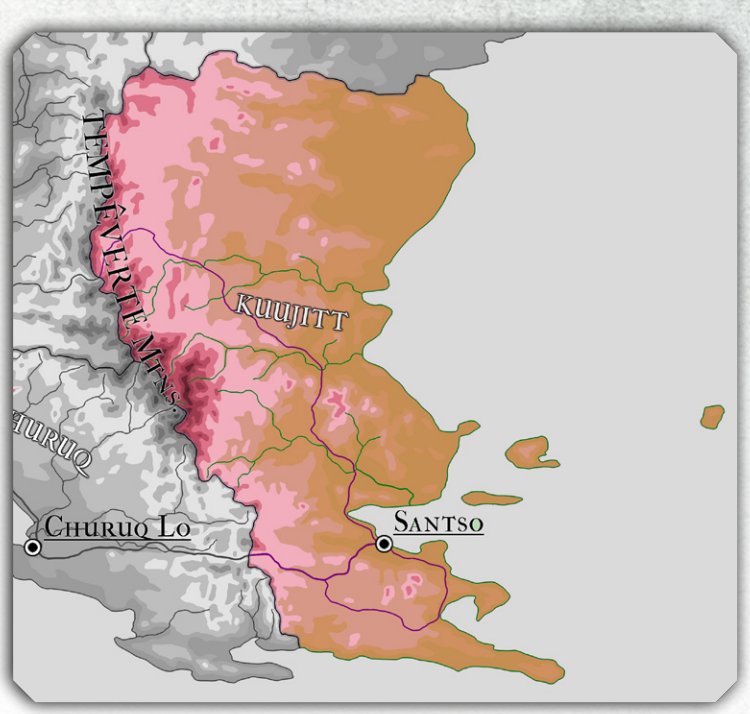
In the contemporary era, Dragonhead is a land of chief-kings known as yarlmaws, who govern individual cities but unite for collective defense. The language and customs, as well as a healthy suspicion of their yarlmaws, reflects the historical amalgamation of Scandzan and Atlantican traditions. The yarlmaws rule when possible by consensus, ensuring the stability and protection of Dragonhead, but having ultimate authority in times of crisis. Recent yarlmaws have paid the price for acting against the people's wishes, however, and once a crisis is over, yarlmaws must face the people. With vast woodlands, grazing lands, and the captivating Dragon's Eye, Dragonhead's thriving exports of fish and whale testify to the hearty and hale people of the land.

KUUJITT

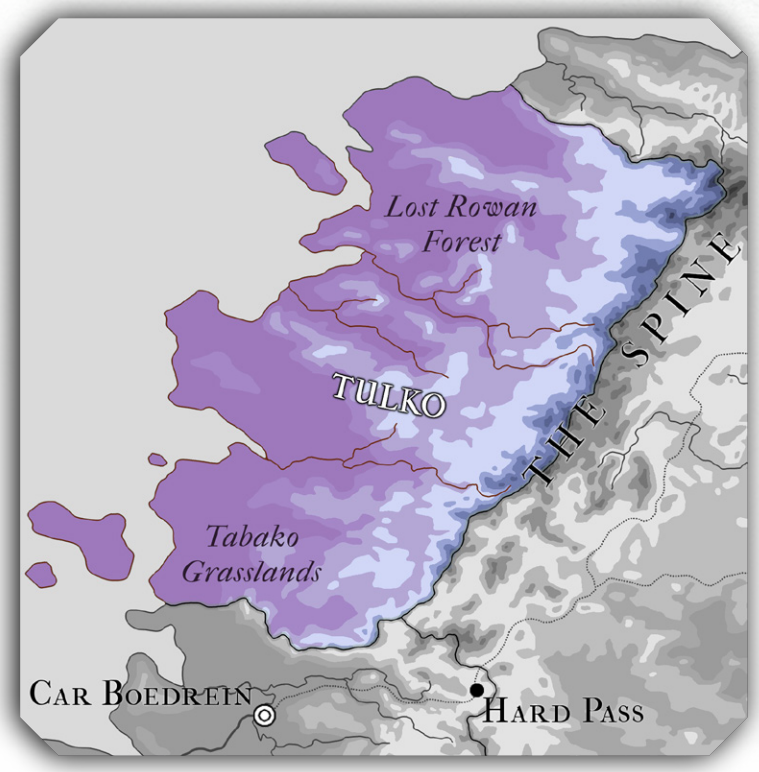
Nestled far to the south along Azore's eastern coastline, Kuujitt is a tropical paradise with lush rainforests, vibrant coral reefs, and golden sandy beaches. The country is dotted with crystalline rivers that meander through dense jungles, and towering mountains rise in the distance, with peaks often obscured by mist. The climate is consistently warm and humid, fostering a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Santso, the capital city, is strategically situated on the coast, offering breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean. Kuujitt's geography not only provides a stunning backdrop for its inhabitants but

also attracts curious travelers seeking refuge from the political complexities of other nations.

In the annals of Kuujitt's history, a pivotal moment occurred around 1200 BR when a group of spiritual visionaries, disenchanted with the Babylonian pantheon, embraced what they termed "The Radiant Principles." Founding the religion of Luminaria, they championed the tenets of Illuminous Harmony, Celestial Equilibrium, and Lustrous Wisdom. The Luminarians faced rejection from their Senekemetian kin, leading to their eventual migration west. In 2224 BR, these Luminarian refugees established Santso on Azore's southeast coast, laying the foundations for the nation of Kuujitt. The fledgling country grew in tandem with the flourishing of their unique religious and cultural identity, providing sanctuary to those seeking refuge from religious persecution.



Kuujitt, now a predominantly Luminarian nation, is governed by the Baxsar Xalkat, the head of the Luminarian religion. This leader is selected through a technocratic process, assessing their oratory skills, mastery of Luminarian theology, and proficiency in wielding sacred magic. The Baxsar Xalkat inherits the responsibility upon the death of their predecessor, ensuring continuity in the leadership. The governance of Kuujitt intertwines spiritual and civic realms, with the Baxsar Xalkat guiding the nation based on The Radiant Principles. Despite occasional discomfort from Neo Babylonian tourists caused by clashing religious practices, Kuujitt stands as a haven of tranquility, free from the political intricacies of the rest of Azore. The nation has become a cherished destination where the allure of its natural beauty and spiritual serenity captivates the hearts of those seeking respite from the bustling world beyond its borders.

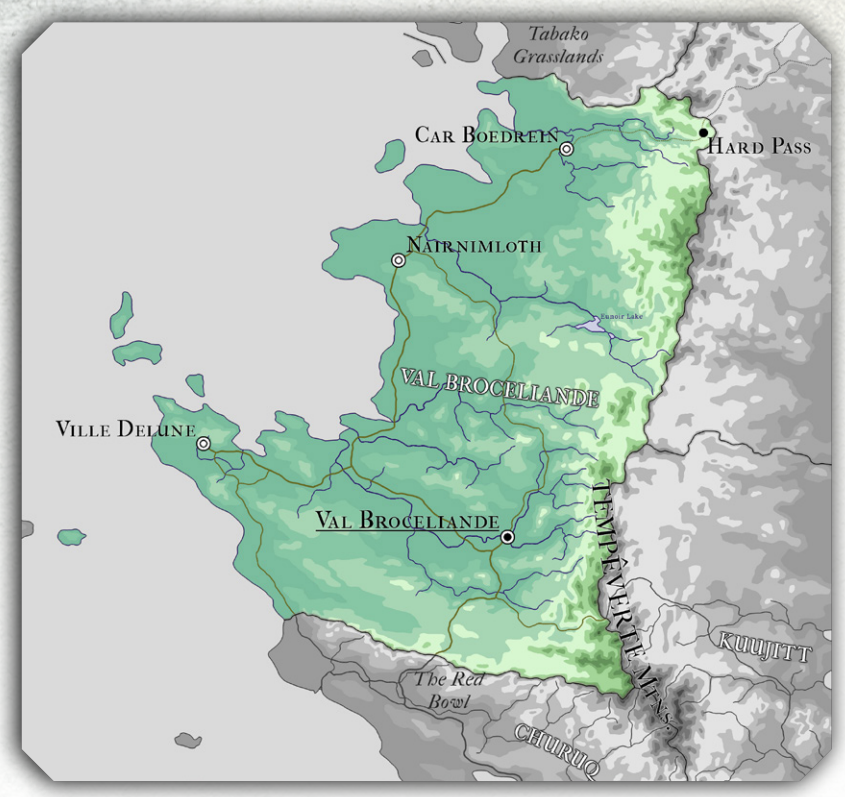


Tulko

Tulko, a lush and fruitful country situated to the West of Neo Babylon, over the Spine of Tiamat, along Azore's west coast, is renowned for its crop production. The land is characterized by vast farmland, the world famous Tabako Grasslands, vinyards, orchards, sprawling hills, and fish runs that dot the landscape. Kiyn Tulko, the capital, stands as a testament to the Ghassulian influence, adorned with low-tech, high-comfort dwellings that harmonize with the natural surroundings. The vast majority of Tulko's population consists of non-elven, non-human communities, primarily orcs and dwarves, reflecting a rich cultural tapestry. While not openly hostile to other nations, Tulko remains discontent with most authoritarian governments, a sentiment exacerbated by historical events.

Tulko was founded at least one hundred years before the birth of Neo Babylon by orcs and

dwarves seeking a better, more simple life away from the politics and high-mindedness of Val Broceliande. But that was not to be the end of their entanglement. In 2625, the Enkeura, known as the Renewers, began to sway the leadership of Tulko, inciting resentment against Val Broceliande. By 2636, the people of Tulko realized the bitter truth of being used, enduring the brutal and bitter rule of the Enkeura, and joined the resistance in the Second Fairy War.



In the contemporary era, Tulko's governance is shaped by the Council of Mothers, a weakly feudal system led nominally by a Grand Mother. However, power is distributed among local councils, each headed by a Mother. The people of Tulko have become more reserved towards outsiders, not out of fundamental xenophobia, but a learned caution. The legacy of the Enkeura's treachery and the ongoing influence of Val Broceliande's government in exile have left Tulko in a delicate balance, with internal tensions and external pressures shaping the nation's trajectory. The vibrant people of Tulko, and their Ghassulian culture, add an additional layer of complexity, with their influence evident in the delight in food, family, and sharing.

Val Broceliande

Val Broceliande, the mystical land in the Broceliande Valley of Azore, is a wonderous tapestry of ancient forests, enchanting landscapes, and deadly politics. The country is rich with incredible sights, such as the Glittering Grove, where fae-touched creatures gather in sacred communion, and the Moonlit Lake, reflecting celestial beauty even in the darkest nights. The Silver Cascade, a waterfall bathed in liquid moonlight, and the Whispering Willows, trees communicating through an intricate root network, add to the ethereal allure. The Red Bowl is a valley stained with the blood of the Fairy Wars, and while not beautiful, it is noteworthy, and it haunts the border of Churuq.

The history of Val Broceliande is steeped in the ancient traditions of fae-touched peoples who were the first inhabitants of Azore. Much later, Fae-led protests in 2568 BR were suppressed, laying the groundwork for the rise of the Enkeura in the next century. The First Fairy War in 2632 BR saw the Enkeura infiltrating Tulko, leading to a coup in Val Broceliande and the exile of its leaders. The Fairy Wars marked a dark chapter in Val Broceliande's history, where Fae culture clashed with the Enkeura's prejudiced rule, resulting in a Second Fairy War in 2636 BR. The eventual defeat of the Enkeura in 2639 BR brought stability to Azore.

In the contemporary era, Val Broceliande is governed by the Court of Nobles, a parliamentary system consisting of the heads of the most powerful and influential families in the realm. This Court oversees the balance between tradition and progress, maintaining the magical essence of Val Broceliande while adapting to the evolving dynamics of Azore. The Court of Nobles emphasizes diplomacy and social standing as a means of gaining power, with representatives from various noble houses contributing to leadership. Despite the embarrassment of the Fairy Wars, Val Broceliande stands as a symbol of lavish, yet sustainable wealth, with the enchanting city of Val Broceliande serving as its capital. The Rhón Túrëa, sublime forces of Val Broceliande, guard the noble families, Outer Rangers patrol the forests and borders, and Inner Rangers deal in secret intelligence and policing within Val Broceliande itself.

THE MAJOR POWERS OF THE WORLD

African Union

The African Union, stretching across the continent roughly below the 10th parallel, expands over deserts and lush landscapes. The history of the African Union is one of resistance to Neo Babylonian hegemony. Senekemet to the north has acted as a soft buffer to Babylonian influence, and as a result, the states to the south were allowed to evolve and flourish in ways atypical to the wider world under Babylonian influence. In 2303 BR, the African Protection Treaty was signed by member states, creating the African Union to protect the economic, cultural, and military interests of the peoples south of Senekemet.

The African Union, a legacy of its rich rainforests and savannas, has historically been the home of many of the most talented spiritualists, negotiating with and empowering native spirits and other magical creatures for boons and protection. For many member nations, strong ties to local spirits form the core of their protection against enemies and, crucially, Tempests, allowing many member nations to avoid paying the Storm Levies, providing them a rare independence from Neo Babylon. Still, this resistance and cultural isolation only goes so far—many member nations do rely on Neo Babylonian storm wardens and the concomitant concessions to Neo Babylonian power, and proximity to Senekemet has challenged AU economic isolationism as they adopt cybertech technologies, bringing corporate footholds into the nation.

In the contemporary era, the African Union operates under a loose supranational mix of confederation and federation. Governed by a council that includes representatives from various regions, the Union focuses on diplomatic collaboration, economic development, and the preservation of their rich spiritual and ecological heritage. The council makes major decisions via supermajority vote, ensuring a broad consensus for any major actions (though the need for broad consensus often leads to deadlocks). While conflicts persist, the primary focus remains on maintaining a united front, fostering peace, and preserving the diverse life within the African Union.

The legacy of their connection and reliance on spirits has created a drastically different society from many other nations industrializing with cybertech, and the AU has been at the forefront of developing and deploying cybertech in a way that is minimally disruptive to the environment and natural spirits, with cybertech drones tending to crops flourishing under the influence of ancient spirits and small workshops dotting the landscape, assembling cybertech machines for their surrounding communities. While the small scale and often bespoke nature of their tech has prevented them from becoming a major exporter, it has lead to widespread adoption of cybertech across the African Union.

Altaiphera

Altaiphera sprawls across an expansive and varied geography from Scandza in the west across the northmost land of the Old World to Nurgan in the east, with the majestic Altai Mountains reigning as the epicenter. The Altaipheran Herdsteppe, characterized by its sweeping grasslands and rugged terrain, serves as the nomadic home to a wildly diverse population. The Altai Mountains, a formidable natural boundary, stand as both a protector and a connector, with their snow-capped peaks and deep valleys shaping the nomadic routes and seasonal migrations of the centaurs, minotaurs, various horseback riders, and many kinds of yettin. The landscape reflects a dynamic interplay of ecosystems, from the sprawling grassy plains where herds graze to the craggy mountain passes that guide the nomads through their cyclical journeys.

In the annals of Altaipheran history, the Wars of Scars 100 years ago stand out as the weightiest in modern history. With the assassination of progressive princess Chalec, the Altaipherans went to war. The yettin resented the new technologies and disrespect of nature they saw in the west, and blamed those in Erebu for the death of Chalec. The war ended with a treaty imposing harsh penalties on many yettin. The Autumnal rebellion, in which bugbears from the steppe refused to fight their kin in the west and joined with many communities of almaslar to resist the violence, became a founding event of the United Yettin Conference with a core of yettin opposed to the conflict becoming the first citizens of that new nation to the south. The second War of Scars emerged from unresolved issues of the first, with the expansionist and militant ambitions of a faction called the Bloody Claw sparking new conflict. An alliance including Neo Babylon eventually overcame the Bloody Claw, and the Altaipherans were forced back into their homelands.

In contemporary Altaiphera, a monarchical government structure prevails, with the rulership passed down through the hereditary line of a central royal family. Their monarchs, called bashkys, rule

from the capital of Altain Khaanutag, and are honored as symbols of continuity and tradition. They oversee the intricate network of nomadic peoples and species and ensure the delicate balance between the various Altaipheran tribes is maintained. The governance is characterized by a blend of customary laws, oral traditions, and the monarch's decrees, reflecting a unique fusion of ancient nomadic customs and the administrative needs of a vast and diverse region. The Altaipherans, while cherishing their nomadic independence, still generally seem to appreciate the bashky, who can navigate the challenges of their expansive territory and the ever present cultural threats of the west.

Erebu

Emerging from the ashes of the Zephyran Alliance, the federation of Erebu stretches from the Rahav Sea in the south, to the Atlantic ocean to the west, and borders Scandza to the north. Moderate regions boast sun-kissed vineyards, historic ruins that echo tales of ancient Macedonia, beautiful coastlines, and a rich tapestry of art, history, and culinary delights. The shores of the Mediterranean and Atlantic and the peaks of the Alps serve as natural borders, uniting the peoples within Erebu under a shared legacy of creativity, resilience, and a profound appreciation for life's simple pleasures.

Erebu has seen its fair share of conflict, beginning with Alexander the Unifier's death and the destruction of the Broceliande forest. Lutesia has long been a bastion of hope and refuge for Erebuans, resisting the Duendes attacks and raising their magical towering oak tree monument in an armistice memoriam. Erebu also survived the Wars of Scars, if only barely, and continued on to become even stronger.

Erebu's geopolitical landscape is a testament to diplomatic finesse, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Governance is handled mostly by the hereditary House of Archons, with local matters, and national matters of low importance, handled by the elected House of Koinoí. Both houses reside in Lutesia. The cities of Erebu are vibrant hubs with Macedonian avant-garde artistic flair, Iberian classical elegance, and the romantic ambiance of Lutesia harmonizing with the dynamic energy of Eravasca. Erebu stands as a beacon of cultural synthesis, a place where the rhythms of mistrenco dancing resonate alongside opera houses and theaters, and where high religion sits alongside powerful crime families. Erebu is a close ally to Neo Babylon, and its cultures compliment much of Neo Babylon's tastes and economics.

Nurgan

Founded by Sun Wukong 14 centuries ago, Nurgan, in northeast asia, covers a diverse and rugged geographical landscape. The vast expanses of the Mongolian steppes stretch across the northern reaches, providing a nomadic margin that has shaped the cultures of the region. The mountainous terrain above Yangguo contrasts with the sprawling plains of Mongolia, while the archipelagos in the eastern sea add an intricate network of islands to the overall tapestry. The geography of Nurgan, marked by steppes, mountains, and islands, has influenced the development of unique cultures and traditions, particularly the yojin ways, within the region.

Throughout its history, Nurgan has been painting on Sun Wukong's canvas, where 1400 years ago, he mapped out the government, culture, and values for his fledgeling nation. Since then, Nurgan has become a bastion of technology, actively shunning arcane magic and rather loudly opposing the Babylonian agenda in the modern age. However, Nurgan's resources are primarily directed toward self-defense and development, limiting its ability to exert significant influence on the global political stage. The Yojin tradition, central to Nurgan's identity, serves as a form of soft power, having incredible influence, but rarely interfering directly in imperial affairs. Cultural products such as films project an image of Nurganese resilience and antiheroism, contributing to the region's international reputation. The diverse cultures within Nurgan have coalesced into a distinct identity, transcending mere pan-Asian influences, bound together by shared history and ideals.

In the present day, Nurgan is governed by an aristocratic oligarchy, led by an emperor, or Tenshi. This ruling structure, based in the capital Yúnshin, reflects a hierarchy that has endured throughout the region's history, with the Tenshi serving as both a political and symbolic figurehead. The governance of Nurgan prioritizes the rejection of arcane magic in favor of technological advancements, creating a society that relies on innovation and pragmatism. Sacred magic has its place in Nurgan as well, but it is marginalized and often practiced more among the nomadic or village folk, and only rarely, although with great fanfare to support the Tenshi, in larger cities. The Nurganese aristocracy, steeped in tradition, oversees the nation's direction, balancing the preservation of cultural values with the ever-evolving challenges of the modern era.

Oceti Sakowin

The Oceti Sakowin follow the path of the Mississippi: strengthening around the source and pouring south. Stretching from Gichigami to the Black Hills, the Seven Council Fires find their powerbase in the prairies and woods of the northern plains, with a system of reciprocal obligations, treaties, and threats expanding their reach down the Mississippi and into the gulf coast. Villages, docks, and warehouses dot the banks as fleets of canoes, bull boats, and traded Neo Babylonian ships race down the waters guided by river mages.

The Oceti Sakowin had existed as a loose idea of related bands and divisions for generations, recognizing each other as being part of the same people but not as a unified nation. This changed in 2355 BR, when the organized Iron Confederacy repelled Dakota raids to the north and successfully led a counterattack in retribution. This defeat, and the threat of an organized rival as their neighbor worried the leaders of the Oceti Sakowin and became the main topic of discussion in every winter camp. Three years later, Chahkahdoka, a chief's son, shared a secret: he had learned the magic of the waters, and the river would become their new domain. In the decades that followed, the Oceti Sakowin rallied around Chahkahdoka and his river mages and began pushing south, manipulating the river waters to propel large fleets of soldiers, traders, and diplomats down its length. Through treaties, war, and coercion, the Oceti Sakowin established control of the Mississippi, allowing no trade to pass through the river without their involvement. When Neo Babylon traders met them at the river's mouth, they extended this deal. Neo Babylon could trade in their waters, but the Oceti Sakowin would control the trade partners and have priority in all dealings. With the assistance of Neo Babylonian trade deals and technology, the Oceti Sakowin have declared themselves the predominant power of the North Atlantican plains and work tirelessly to maintain this position.

Chahkahdoka rallied the Oceti Sakowin from loosely connected bands into a military coalition, and his river mages ensured that this cohesion would not fade in the centuries since his passing. The first river mages were hand-selected by Chahkahdoka from people across the nation, crossing boundaries of band and division. The River Lodges maintain this tradition by training cross-band cohorts, keeping cohesion while continually instilling the importance of their own society. Today the coalition still stands, with bands committed to defending each other and their interests. While the Oceti Sakowin have never given up the autonomy of their bands and keep local governance decentralized, the influence of the River Lodges on decision-making is impossible to ignore. Many worry about the internal plans of the society, and what may happen to bands that act against them.

Scandza

Scandza is the military, political, and economic union of the various peoples located to the North of Erebu, comprised mainly of those peoples surrounding the Baltaz Sea, as well as those with Diutisc heritage. The region's landscapes vary from fjords in the west and Scandzan mountains covering parts of the peninsula, to low, flat areas in the south, as well as archipelagos and lakes in the east. Ethereal auroras dance over the north, and medieval castles dot the countryside to the south. Between Scandza and Erebu lies Rodrom, a vast and inhospitable landscape known for its hellpits, full of domed towns where gnomes aided human settlements when the shattering decimated the land.

Hundreds of years before the founding of Neo Babylon, the Scandzan peoples raided, colonized, and traded with each other and throughout Erebu. Their longships explored the world, with Eiríkr Rauði even becoming the first Erebuans to reach Azore in 1585 BR. These exploits saw the establishment of Dragonhead on Azore's north coast, which merged Scandzan cultures with indigenous peoples from North Atlantica. Scandza eventually adopted Babylonian religious practice, with their gods, such as Odin, Sif, and Thor joining the Baru pantheon as Nabu, Ishtar, and Marduk. It also saw numerous wars and skirmishes between tribes along the border of Erebu, as well as the Wars of Scars and treaties with Neo Babylonian allies, which shaped its modern boundaries.

The largest part of governance falls on local rulers called skati (plural skatnar), allowing each group to retain some autonomy while the largest decisions fall on the Grest Council, promoting collective prosperity. The cities of Scandza serve as bustling hubs of innovation, where design, craftsmanship, and industrious spirit converge with intellectual prowess. In Scandza, the ancient, dark forests exist as they have for millennia next to cities of modern architecture, creating dynamic and forward-thinking societies that draw strength from their historical roots.

Senekemet

Senekemet, spanning across Africa in patches above the 10th parallel, is a diverse and geographically varied expanse. From the arid stretches of the Sahara Desert to the lush greenery of the Senegambian and Nile regions, Senekemet's geography is marked by a tapestry of landscapes.

Dakar, one of its three capitals, is an incredibly advanced port city and holds a prominent position in the Senekemetian landscape, acting as the Gateway to Neo Babylon. Its vast and diverse geography has played a pivotal role in shaping Senekemet's history and the development of its distinct cultural and economic centers.

Senekemet's historical narrative is closely tied to the events of 845 BR, in which it regained its stolen heritage in Kemet from Babylon after forming a strategic alliance with Babylon's Arcanist council. The arcanists overthrew Babylon's ruler, and Senekemet, empowered by new technology and magical secrets, established three regional capitals with distinct cultural influences and functions, presiding over administrative (Carthage), judicial and religious (Memphis), and monarchical (Dakar) functions.

In the contemporary era, Senekemet is governed by a Technocratic Monarchy, a system where their monarchs, called firawns, are elected from a slate of candidates based on technical expertise and knowledge. The region has evolved into a dynamic economic powerhouse, with Dakar in particular standing as a nexus of corporate power and technological advancement and acting as a key player in global trade. The integration of new technologies and the emergence of corporate entities have played a crucial role in shaping Senekemet's current landscape. The ancient families of Senekemet stretch back millennia and many of them hold secrets about the world and its magics that are just as ancient. Navigating the complex politics of the region often proves deadly.

Sindhu

Sindhu, situated in the southern part of the Asian continent, boasts a diverse and vast geographical expanse. The landscape ranges from the fertile plains of the Ganges River basin to the towering peaks of the Himalayas in the north. Lush tropical forests blanket the southern regions, and the coastline along the Bay of Bengal adds a maritime dimension to Sindhu's geography. This diverse terrain has played a crucial role in shaping the nation's culture and history, fostering a rich tapestry of traditions and lifestyles.

In the years leading up to 2650 BR, Sindhu has witnessed a dynamic evolution. It has always been a crucible of cultural exchange, embracing a legacy that dates back to the time of Old Babylon. Powerful empires have come and gone, but Sindhu has always embraced its local deities alongside those of Babylon. More than any other culture, the people of Sindhu embraced Babylonian refugees after the Shattering. As such, their cultures grew alongside each other and evolved in many multicultural ways the West did not. Now, Sindhu stands as a vibrant mosaic of ancient hindu traditions and babylonian innovations, having embraced sacred magic in nearly every aspect of life. This has led to a very spiritual, and less technologically-based culture than most, but Sindhu, specifically Kalikkhetrô, the capital, boasts one of the highest quality of life indexes in the world, so they are not suffering for lack of advanced tech.

In the contemporary era, Sindhu operates under a bureaucratic monarchy of satrapies, a unique governance structure where the monarch serves as a symbolic figurehead and actual governance is conducted by the satrap congress. The monarch's role is ceremonial, symbolizing continuity and tradition. The satrapies, regional administrative divisions, wield substantial power and autonomy in governing their respective territories. The satrap congress, composed of satraps from across Sindhu, votes on all matters of state and governance, with legislation being only ceremonially stamped by the monarch.

United Yettin Conference

The UYC was formed by yettin groups rebelling against the brutality of the Bloody Claw regime during the First War of Scars. Fueled by a desire for peace and unity, they banded together to establish their own sovereign nation north of the Black Sea and girded by the Carpathian mountains in the west. Nestled amid the arable plains of a wide basin with a tapestry of golden fields, winding rivers, and deep black soil, it became an agricultural bastion, and a haven for yettin who sought a harmonious coexistence. Their economy depends on agricultural exports, especially grains and wines. Drawing inspiration from the diverse cultures of the region, the various allies developed a unique society that blended ancient traditions with their own communal values.

The capital of the Conference is Gelidara, located in the mountains in the west of the nation. Governance is in the hands of a number of elders, primarily yettin, who reach decisions by consensus. The nation's infrastructure, although unconventional by most standards, showcases the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the population. Buildings, elevators, roadways, vehicles, furniture: all are build to accommodate the largest yettin, minotauri, and centauri. Born from the ashes of conflict, the UYC stands as a testament to the extraordinary potential for harmony between different beings… at least on the surface.

There are undercurrents of discontent in the Conference, primarily dissatisfaction with the

elders, as well as strong tensions between yettin and growing minority populations. The secular majority in UYC also clashes with religious minorities, especially those who have accepted the syncretic faith of Neo Babylon. In the international sphere, the UYC strongly opposes Neo Babylonian influence and tightly regulates corporate activities in order to support a sustainability agenda.

Yangguo

Yangguo occupies the vast expanse of East Asia south of Nurgan. Encompassing territories that once belonged to Liu Bei's Shu, Yangguo emerged victorious in the Three Kingdoms Struggle, establishing itself as a new Han state. The geographical landscape of Yangguo is diverse, ranging from the mountainous regions of Sichuan to the coastal areas surrounding the East Sea. The island of Liuqiu serves as the seat of power, a tranquil haven safeguarded by the protection of Babylonian Arcanists after the turmoil of the Taiping Rebellion. Xiamen, a bustling port city, now hosts the political capital, while the peaceful island of Liuqiu became the defensible redoubt for the Arcanists.

The history of Yangguo is shaped by a dynamic interplay of political intrigue, magic, and cultural evolution. Zhuge Liang, emperor after Liu Bei, ruled by magical prowess, but his death gave way to a dynasty facing challenges and coups. Legendary leaders Kumarajiva and Faxian played pivotal roles in influencing the course of history, merging Buddhist teachings with arcane formulae to the realm. The Tang Dynasty witnessed the subtle integration of magic into governance, with a structured system of magical recruitment camouflaged within civil service bureaucracy. Despite the influence of Babylon, the Taiping Rebellion marked a turning point, when a populist sacred leader led a rebellion against Babylonian influence, and as a result the bureaucracy was "reluctantly" forced to exert evermore control over the Empire, relegating the emperor to a figurehead. Sun Wukong, an influential yettin hero, departed Yangguo in protest of Babylonian influence resulting in the establishment of Nurgan to the north.

In contemporary Yangguo, the political landscape is characterized by a blend of academic nobility and Arcane influence. The head of the Hanlin Academy wields substantial power, steering the nation's course from Liuqiu. The emperor, now a symbolic figure, stands overshadowed by the nobility who are soundly pro-Babylonian and who continue to guide the bureaucracy. The largest port, Xiamen, is also the nation's political capital, showcasing stunningly tall buildings, massive public works and monuments, and grand parades. However, the nation finds itself hemmed in by neighboring powers, with a stratified society based on academic achievements. The legal system is paired with a social-credit mechanism to ensure societal conformity. Daily life revolves around education, government service, and the challenges posed by a cutthroat, individualistic society, emphasizing the delicate balance between magic, governance, and societal order.

Sunabá

The Sunabán Trade Empire extends further than any other nation on earth, stretching from trade ports on Australia to the Sunabán trade islands in the Atlantic Ocean, though the bulk of their population lies in coastal cities that spread from the eastern edge of South Atlantica up through central Atlantica and the Yucatan peninsula, with its capital centered on the great Sunabán canal.

The genesis of the Sunabán Trade Empire emerged from trade routes established by Polynesian Pilots, whose mastery of force magic predates Neo Babylon. Connecting much of the south Pacific, including south and central Atlantica, they eventually established formalized conventions of trade that connected communities across the Pacific. The uptake of these conventions of trade formed the original basis of the Sunabán Trade Empire, largely defined by communities that adopted these conventions. By 800 BR, trade across the Pacific ocean and South and Central Atlantica was commonplace, culminating in the creation, through extensive cooperation and force magic, of the Sunabán canal—and with it the shared governance that formally established what would become the Empire. Over the next centuries, it slowly grew to encompass much of the Caribbean and eastern coast of South Atlantica. The Sunabán oceanfaring skill and willingness to trade was unparalleled in the ancient world—and the Sunabáns made contact and established trade with Senekemet in 850 BR.

While technically an empire (with succession occurring solely through adoption, thereby passing the seat across different peoples across the empire), the ability of the emperor to establish law is quite weak, and law largely exists on precedent and interpretation of those thousand year old trading conventions, with everyone across Sunabá knowing the laws of trade and expected to uphold them. Longstanding treaties provide for tithes towards the empire's military, which keeps the oceans free of pirates and limits the encroachment from outside nations. The cultures of Sunabán are as varied as the empire is vast—and the long traditions of connections and intermarriage among them lead to communities where traditions from across the world blend together in a single community.

The People of Neo Babylon

THE SEVEN LINES OF KINGU

According to the religion of Neo Babylon, there are seven primary species created to be servants to the gods. The gods certainly have created others, but these seven were made especially to represent the gods on earth, serve them with their gifts, and honor the gods with their lives.

When the high god Marduk defeated Tiamat, he gave orders to create servants for the gods who no longer wished to serve the primals. Antu formed them from clay, Enki provided the blood of Tiamat's vanquished consort Kingu, and Damkina midwifed the young species into being.

Religious scholars will note that the seven lines have not always been seven. In the earliest scriptures, only humans were noted to have been made by the blood of Kingu. But as it became clear these other species had special destinies and served the gods through civilization and the gift of government, the priests and scribes took it as new revelation that other species stood alongside humans as heirs of Kingu. Whether more species will be revealed as lines of Kingu will only be revealed by the gods themselves.

KURU, THE DWARVE

"Then went all the gods to their judgment seats, and thereon took counsel: how shall the line of Kuru be created? Kin to the bones of [illegible] and the wine-dark sea? In forelikeness of [illegible] pressed, dense, and sturdy, they then [illegible] them and [illegible] them onto the earth."

The scriptures say dwarves were one of the seven peoples created from earth and blood by Antu, Enki, and Damkina. Its teachings read that they received more clay than blood. Perhaps that is why they've traditionally built civilizations around connections to earth's various environments. Originally, dwarven culture relied heavily on farming and mining, but once their ancestors took to the seas and skies, they excelled there as well as pilots, pirates, and engineers.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

Dwarves mature at the same age as humans do, but they live much longer and tend to be resistant to many of the biological reasons for human death. Dwarves often live up to 150 years, spending more than half their lives as what other peoples see as very old people.

SIZE

Average dwarves are 1.375 meters, or 4.5 feet tall. This average is misleading, however, as many dwarves are as short as 1 meter, or 3 feet, while others are as tall as 1.75 meters, or 6 feet, though those cases are exceedingly rare.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Compared to humans, dwarven hair grows very fast. Their bodies are generally more sturdy than other peoples and their skin coloration includes what is common in humans, but also rare instances of dwarves with blue tints to their skin have been seen. Some dwarves express rare, recessive traits, likely from regional variations, that are atypical and considered monstrous by some.

Lilu, the Elves

The earliest manuscripts from On High do not mention the elven peoples. The newest redactions of official Baru scriptures, however, include the Lilu as one of the peoples created by Antu, Enki, and Damkina. Elves have had a complicated history with the other peoples of the world, and a good deal of mistrust still exists due to the Fairy Wars of recent memory. But time moves on and the elven people, some of whom still keep ancient traditions alive, are also finding their place in a modern world.

Before their recognition as a line of Kingu, the lilu were considered demons of a sort, akin to lilitu, who snuck into homes at night, stealing children or mating with people to have demon children. But as of yet, no one has put forth any historical basis for this ancient hysterical belief.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

Elven age is complicated. While it is clear the average elf's lifespan is longer than all other peoples', the upper range varies wildly. Young elves mature around the same age as humans but do not decline as they age as other peoples do. When they die, they simply die, having no middle age or senior years.

SIZE

The height of the average elf is 1.65 meters tall. There is less variation in size among elves than other peoples, but outliers do exist.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Elves appear to only have slight cosmetic differences from humans, but this is deceiving. Elves do have pointed ears and somewhat severe features compared to average humans, their hair is also thinner, but stronger, than other species. They have thinner skin and tend to have more allergies than other peoples as well. Their skin color is similar to that common among humans, with green and purplish tints being less common.

Ahazu, the Goblins

All those under heaven,
The primal Seven,
E'en the small and slick
Ahazu so quick
Do not ignore
Their deep-learned lore
O'er spirits will ye
Ne'er master be.

The Ahazu, or goblins, more than any other species, have made an art of fitting in. According to the words from On High, they were the last of the seven peoples made by Antu from clay, given Kingu's blood by Enki, and midwifed by the Damkina, and their gift was to adapt to the others' ways. Goblins have always been associated with fixing, helping, or otherwise enhancing other cultures and species; despite their breadth of heritage worldwide, rarely have their own unique cultures been given center stage.

Before the revelation of Ahazu as one of the lines of Kingu, they were considered demons who lurked and snuck among people's homes, waiting to seize their belongings.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

Goblins have a similar life cycle to humans, living typically less than 100 years. Goblin bodies show external signs of aging such as hair graying and thinning and skin becoming more lined and wrinkled, but their physical and mental facilities do not deteriorate as they age.

SIZE

Most goblins stand about 1.25 meters tall, but it is common for goblins to be slightly less than one meter as well.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Goblins are among the smallest of the world's peoples, and range in skin color from green, being most common, to yellow and orange, with many wonderful shades between. Typical goblins have large, bulbous noses, elongated and pointed ears, and lean, wiry musculatures.

Harmaku, The Harpies

"Favored of Ishtar, the Harmaku flew above the sea with bright colors, free from the binds of the earth, connected by their passions and family."

The second line of Kingu to be created, Ishtar claimed the Harmaku for her own, and tasked Antu to form them in her likeness. In ancient times, it's said that Harmaku Broods lived in clifftop settlements over the ocean, soaring through the air on winds and thermals, skimming fish from the ocean with nets and talons. Whether that was ever true is a matter of some debate, as only the strongest of Harmaku can rely on their wings to reliably glide, with their wings relegated to balance or decoration. Harmaku reproduce via parthenogenesis and are generally considered all female by other lineages, though Harmaku culture does not have a meaningful concept of gender (at least that lines up cleanly with those of other lineages). Harmaku who integrate into broader societies typically use feminine pronouns, though others insist that applying the gender categories of other lineages to Harmaku is a category error. Family units for Harmaku are called broods—shared lines descended from different progenitor matriarchs in the distant past.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

Harmaku mature more slowly than other lineages, reaching adulthood around the age of 25. Harmaku have a similarly longer natural lifespan, often living to 120 years or more, though they are more susceptible to illnesses and only with the rise of modern medicine have they seen their average life expectancies surpass other lineages.

SIZE

The size of Harmaku varies greatly among broods, with the smallest only slightly taller than goblins at 1.25 meters tall, while some of the largest rival Yettin at nearly 2.5m tall.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Harmaku are distinct for their wings, feathers, and talons for feet. Technically clonal, to outsiders all Harmaku of a brood look similar, though they express more variability than identical twins in other species, and members of a brood have little difficulty telling each other apart, even in the largest of broods. Different broods, however, appear vastly different. Some have elaborate plumage that cover much of their bodies, while others have plumage limited to their wings. Colors, both of their feathers and skin, vary wildly, ranging from bright colors to drab black.

Awilu, the Humans

"As for the human, their days are numbered, whatever they might do, it is but wind."

According to the scriptures from On High, humans were the first of the peoples created to be the servants of the gods. It is written that Marduk's order to create people hung in the air until human ears were the first to hear it, thus Marduk's ambition and will clung to them. Humans were the first to create large civilizations, and have spread to every corner of the world, assimilating, and being assimilated by, all other peoples.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

A human reaches physical maturity around the age of 20, and with mental and emotional faculties slightly later. A human in good health can expect to live between 80 to 100 years on average.

SIZE

The average human is 1.7m tall, though there is a great deal of variation.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Humans are somewhat a physically unremarkable lineage compared to the other peoples. Their hair color ranges from earthy browns and reds to pale blonde or dark black. Their skin colors are likewise varied from dark brown to olive to ruddy to pale.

Urqurk, the Orcs

"The Earth and the Wind spawned Desire, Desire spawned Death and Mud, and they the germs of life. There the orc burst forth as from an egg. Inspired and nurtured by Taautus, were the first to invent letters and write records in their own manner, and he taught them the deep magic of the spheres."

The Tablets of Creation record the orc peoples among those midwifed by Damkina, and historical records of the influence of the orcs as part of the Ghassulian peoples date back to ancient Kemetian records under Thutmose III. As noted from On High, even before the blood of Kingu was given to them, the first clay urqurk began to move, such was their desire for life, and once Enki applied the blood of Kingu, Damkina almost dropped them because of their lively squirming.

Ancient stories trying to discredit them as a legitimate civilization ascribed many traits to orcs that have never been universal, such as hotheadedness and higher pain tolerance. Orcs, in fact, share more similarities with humans than any people, and have experienced dominance, persecution, and integration in equal measure around the world and throughout history.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

An orc reaches physical maturity around the age of 17, slightly earlier than humans. Orcs are much more sensitive to diet than other peoples with many in poor health living life spans shorter than humans, but those in good health having robust lives in excess of 100 years, while in rare cases orcs have been recorded to exceed 175 years.

SIZE

The average orc is 1.9m tall, but their range is even greater than that of humans.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Orcs tend to be taller and bulkier than humans and have more prominent facial bones, but are otherwise similar in appearance except for their elongated and pointed ears, and lower canines that extend into large tusks. Orc skin and hair share human ranges, though greenish tones exist in some lineages.

La-Tarak, the Yettin

The yettin in the mountain communities profess that they have lived there since the beginning of time; they did not traditionally believe in creator deities but focused on answerable questions of philosophy and behavior, and how the world works in the present. Ancient Babylonian sources thought of La-Tarak as a protective deity who wore the skin of an animal and roamed the stepped plains north of Mesopotamia; once yettin began to interact with other people more regularly, however, there were hypotheses that Yettin were demons or perhaps half-human monsters sent by the gods. Both of these have been proven untrue but persist in certain religious circles. The most recent revelation from on high places the La-Tarak as servants of the gods, from the blood of Kingu, just as the others, albeit with gifts to rule the places where most other lines cannot, or will not, live.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

LIFESPAN

Yettin mature at approximately the same rate as humans, and have a similar lifespan; certain Yettin, for reasons unknown, are able to surpass this limit, living for several hundred years.

SIZE

The smallest Yettin are still over two meters tall, but on average around 2.5 to 2.75 meters is typical. The tallest Yettin ever recorded was almost 4 meters.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

More than other species, Yettin from various parts of the world differ from each other in various ways. Their commonalities are in size and musculature, and their rough-hewn features with flattened noses; their variety comes in size, variation in the length of their arms, and colors and configuration (or lack) of fur, which for most types covers their bodies all over except for the face, palms, and soles.

MAJOR CULTURES OF NEO BABYLON

ALTAIPHERAN

The Altaipheran are the largest native Yettin culture, originating in Altaiphera, on the steppe to the Northeast of Erebu. As the physically largest of the common species on the planet, Yettin have commonly been most comfortable in their own communities, and, for much of history, integrated less with the surrounding cultures. This has led to a stereotype of Yettin antisocial behavior, while in truth they are as drawn to community as anyone, as evidenced by the formation of the United Yettin Conference, or UYC.

The UYC is a legacy of the Autumnal Rebellion when thousands of Yettin from the steppes rebelled against the Altaipheran Yettin during the First War of Scars; they refused to fight their kin further west and abandoned the war, eventually coalescing into a singular nation with many types of Yettin, as well as other folks, especially as they defended against the worst predations of the Bloody Claw. No single Yettin culture dominates the UYC, and people live many lifestyles from high tech corporate workers to Luddite hunter-gatherers.

Cuisine in the UYC is difficult to immediately define other than by volume; large meals of fresh food are the expected norm, and food comes in abundance, focusing on calorie density. The melting pot nature of the country means that many immigrants needed to adapt to its local environment when dietary needs were explored, which has led to extensive experimentation and a sense of culinary and artistic freedom.

Due to its Yettin origin, the language of the UYC, Altaipheran, seems to resonate and rumble from deep within the throat with velar consonants, possibly due to the extended construction of the soft palate of Yettin, which was adapted for their eating habits. It is difficult but not impossible for other peoples to learn and speak it fluently.

COUNTRIES WITH MAJORITY ALTAIPHERAN CULTURE

Altaiphera, UYC (United Yettin Conference)

CITIES WITH LARGEST ALTAIPHERAN POPULATIONS

Kuligorod, Melkogorod, Moskvĕgorod, Neo Babylon

ALTAIPHERAN NAMES

Names in the UYC are varied, but it is worth noting that most of the population has a tripartite name structure, with one given name and two surnames, one from each parent.

COMMON GIVEN NAMES

Oksana, Kateryna, Oleg, Anton, Terta, Greg, Kira

COMMON SURNAMES

Bokyo, Vovk, Kulik (or Kulig), Hongar, Olynik

Surnames can also be formed by adding the suffix -kev to a parent's given name.

BABYLONIAN

The world's first truly cosmopolitan city, Neo Babylon quickly outgrew its beginnings as a city that would unify many cultures through trade and has become instead the world leader in nearly every area. To many, the dream of Neo Babylon is a worthwhile endeavor, blending all cultures into one, having the best of all worlds, and offering limitless opportunities to rise above the flood of hardship history has offered. For others, however, Neo Babylon and its propaganda are a flattening of beautiful and diverse heritages, the vices and pettiness from every group, and instead of limitless opportunity, they've only found oppression. Dreams and nightmares. That is what Neo Babylon is made of.

Babylonians' diets are rich and include meat, fish, dairy, vegetables and fruits as well as grains and legumes. Barley is the most used grain, and porridge, bread, and beer are the most common of its uses. Lentils and chickpeas are also common, with over 50 fish dishes, dozens of kinds of cheese, and innumerable variations of soups and pottage. Infinite combinations of meat, cheese, spices, and grains keep Babylonian cuisine always in flux.

The best examples of Neo Babylon's syncretic culture are in the areas of magic, religion, and language. Every type of magic college and sublime monastery is available in the city, but it is the "sacred faith of Babylon" that dominates. This religion has become a monolith into which practices and beliefs from a multitude of polytheistic faiths have been drawn, creating a "universal religion", all with the names and faces of the deities of ancient Babylon. People in Neo Babylon tend to speak CommonUr, a hodgepodge language with great richness but little internal consistency.

COUNTRIES WITH MAJORITY BABYLONIAN CULTURE

Neo Babylon, Mazar, Tabaya (it should be noted that nearly all countries and peoples East of Azore could be considered Babylonian influenced, but a form mixed with more indigenous culture as well. It is impossible to overstate or untangle Babylonian influence over the last 2,500 years).

CITIES WITH LARGEST BABYLONIAN POPULATION

Neo Babylon, Eridu, Shuru-Pak, Larack, Birtu Isitu, Shippar, Badt Ibira

NEO BABYLONIAN NAMES

Honoring the gods is the most common form of naming convention in Neo Babylon. Other names, such as Ansa, Cloy, Yanzu, and Charliziru are in fashion recently despite non-Babylonian origins.

COMMON GIVEN NAMES

(Male) Abed, Abimiras, Beltashazar, Callen, Chad, Charliziru, Cloy, Dagan, Dakuri, Gibil, Lidan, Mishak, Sargon, Shadrak, Yanzu. (Female) Allatu, Annatu, Ansa, Banit, Belit, Damkina, Gaga, Gula, Ishtar, Kishar, Kissare, Lilitu, Mot, Mummu, Ri, Rubati, Shala

COMMON SURNAMES

Abinebo, Abumar, Baalmar, Baghdasaryan, Baldiyan, Balthazar, Balto, Enlilyan, Gudeamar, Hammurabi, Ilgi, Inannayan, Merodach, Neboyan, Nabua, Rimsin, Tassi

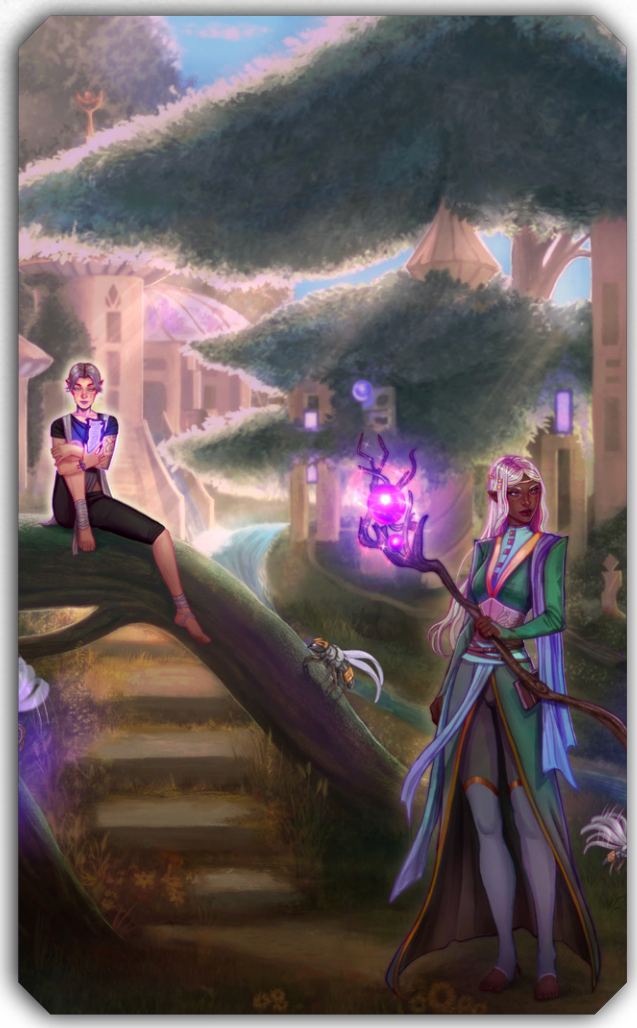
Neo Babylonian surnames are often chosen in homage to the family's favored deity. "Bel" is a common phrase indicating the god Marduk (Bel is a common alternate name of Marduk). Mar indicates "daughter of" and yan indicated "son of," so family names often are [god's name + mar/yan] such as Belmar or Belyan, Ishmar or Ishyan, or Nabumar or Nabuyan.

Brocelian

Legends say that Val Broceliande was the first nation founded on Azore, not long after the Shattering, as exiles (primarily elves in Eire formerly of Broceliande forest) gathered from around the world were led there by "fae creatures"; in any event, this is the oldest culture on Azore. The Fairy Wars were all too recent for people with this origin and caused many to scatter before, during, and after, both supporters and opposition to the Enkeura Party. This recent history has made people with this origin deeply and often radically political in many ways, the worst example being the Valkyr gang resident in the Undercity.

To outsiders, people of this origin can seem dour and humorless. While capable of jokes, we are told, the culture typified insular existence, and there is an innate hesitancy pervading their interactions; folk from Val Broceliande do not give the benefit of the doubt, they wait for proof to trust.

Inherited from the elven founders, folk here have a sense of the simple and the brutalist. Art, food, and language are all performed without adornment or enhancement that is seen as superfluous to function. Food is often served with ingredients standing alone, rarely seen combined in a dish, but set in counterpoise on the plate. Similarly, the sweeping arches of Brocelian architecture are the most efficient way to bear a load; the fact that arches are seen as beautiful and in harmony with the nature around it is often overlooked. The local dialects are sharp and full of hard consonants, focusing on the relationships between words rather than extensive descriptors.



Countries with Majority Brocelian Culture

Val Broceliande

Cities with Largest Brocelian Populations

Val Broceliande, Ville Dilune, Naernimloth, Car Boedrino

Brocelian Names

In Val Broceliande, surnames are traditionally inherited from the male parent, though among the Enkeura faction the child takes the surname of the highest-ranked family member, be it grandmother, uncle, or third cousin.

Common Given Names

Adelante, Dëaron, Enzo, Gabriel, Greyson, Louis, Lucièn, Sophya, Yuliette

Common Surnames

Kuivariel, Lúthien, Merolás, Éndomiel, Ingirathorin

Chaldani (Acape Anya)

Known as being one of the most sociable and friendly areas of Azore, Acape Anya was one of the largest to exist on Azore before Neo Babylon was built. Originally populated by the Early Chaldani, a people who bear marks of culture curiously similar to Old Babylon, its makeup has continued to evolve with waves of immigrants, and with particular shifts following the Duendes attacks in Erebu hundreds of years ago. Once the Duendes' armies reached Azore, many warriors, mostly Dwarves, abandoned their posts and settled in Acape Anya. Since then, dwarven immigrants from Iberia and Atlantica have made their home here, transforming Chaldani culture into a beautiful mix of Latin and Central Atlantican heritage. Now largely a dwarven city, the Chaldani in Acape Anya tend to value large, extended families and hospitality; they are almost certain to have an extra seat at the table. The local culture also

tends to favor intricacy and rococo embellishment in all art forms, and they tend to enjoy fine living.

Chaldani folk tend to be gourmands and hedonists, reveling in what can be created but also in sharing it. This also means that deep insult can be given when sharing and hospitality are refused or abused. The dominant cuisine is centered on small plates that are often intricately constructed with complex flavors; they enjoy wines that show off not only the skill of the vintner but the way that time interacts with the ingredients.

Some tensions exist between Acape Anya and cities in Erebu, primarily due to residual tensions caused by the Duendes. Out of Iberia formed the Erebuan Bravia, an organized crime syndicate that plagues most Erebuan cities and now extends to Neo Babylon through Acape Anya's Iberian roots.

Chaldani, a mix of Latin, Old Chaldani, and dwarven tongues, is the local language of Acape Anya. It is mellifluous and quick, with a near staccato speed that can leave novice speakers lost in the third past present participle.

COUNTRIES WITH MAJORITY CHALDANI CULTURE

Acape Anya

CITIES WITH LARGEST CHALDANI POPULATIONS

Acape Anya, Artelonia, Otrasevilla

CHALDANI NAMES

According to Chaldani customs, a person's name consists of their given name followed by the first surnames of their parents. Thus Henri, the child of Yonath Domangul Gomul and Zephira Baro Suarul, would be Henri Domangul Baro. Historically, men place the father's surname first and women take their mother's surname first, thus if Maria was the child of the same two parents above, she would be Maria Baro Domangul. In more recent years, this convention has given way to children of any gender choosing which surnames they prefer first.

COMMON GIVEN NAMES

(Female) Camiline, Danili, Lucialis, Sofi, Isabelis, Valentis, Victori, Zephira (Male) Diegur, Henri, Martur, Nicolin, Santiagri, Sebastin, Tomin, Yonathur

COMMON SURNAMES:

Azuco, Baro, Cervinta, Domangul, Esparath, Estergo, Florul, Gomul, Hyraxias, Lopul, Paladino, Ramirul, Rejeso, Ruul, Suarul, Velasul

Note: the "-ul" suffix indicates etymology meaning "child of" as in Gomul, meaning child of Gom. An "-as" suffix indicates a regional name, as in Anyas, "from Acape Anya," or Iberias, "from Iberia." The "-o" suffix usually points to a profession, such as Paladino, "a paladin," or Baro, "a baru-priest."

CHURUQIAN

Churuq was a nation founded on Azore by goblin colonists from South Atlantica, and because of this unique history, it possesses some features that aren't pronounced elsewhere in the world; for most visitors, the compact nature of the buildings and rooms is the most obvious. The culture of Churuq places little value on physical prowess, so people of any lineage tend to be less muscular than the average elsewhere.

But foundation myths suggest that when the colonists arrived, they found an arcane tower, already ancient, and settled around it. Researchers, explorers, and innovators flocked to the new city (and later nation), and over time Churuq straddled the line between the use of science and the arcane; their practical application of both techniques to everyday problems led to many positive interactions with other nations. Even as one of the few places that goblins are so numerous, it has not developed into "goblin land". Residents of all lineages will quietly tell you that they have adapted the best they found in other cultures and that each of them finds their own truth in how to show the world the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Churuq cuisine relies on technique rather than preferred ingredients and has little in the way of preconceived popular dishes. Poaching in water, oil, or even with direct magic is more common than more blunt applications of fire. The region is especially known for its chocolatiers and unique vineyard which produce the immensely popular "goblin strangewine".

Influenced by the speech patterns of goblins, the local language, La-Churuq, is spoken at a lower register and rumbles slightly with glottal stops. The pace of the speech is also slower than other areas, leading some to underestimate the abilities of the wily Churuqians.

COUNTRIES WITH MAJORITY CHURUQIAN CULTURE

Churuq, Sunabá (Sunabá does not technically have a majority Churuqian culture, but there is tremendous overlap between the culture of Churuq and the goblin population of Sunabá, that, aside from naming conventions, are incredibly similar).

CITIES WITH LARGEST CHURUQIAN POPULATIONS

Churuq-Lo, Kaaporanga, Ibira Rambuera

CHURUQIAN NAMES

Names of Churuqian origin often seem harsh and somewhat silly to outsiders' ears. In fact, only recently, within the last 100 years, did Churuqians begin to take surnames for the ease of trade and communication with other peoples. As a result, their naming conventions seem odd and somewhat crude to others but are now considered sacred among those whose ancestors chose them. Poke fun at your own peril. Churuqian given names are from Churuqian language and are not gendered. Surnames are used for trade and as such are spoken in CommonUr.

COMMON GIVEN NAMES

Moachee, Cauag, Ubirajaruk, Ubiratak, Ruduk, Jacug, Janaínak, Iaree, Uiarag, Potiruk, Iracemak, Maírug

The Suffixes "-ee, -ak, -ag, -uk, and -ug" are all common in Churuqian names. "-ee" translates as "is like," as in "Moachee" or "is like Pain." "-ak" translates as "hunter" as in "Ubiratak" or "stiff spear hunter." "-ag" translates as "worker," as in Uiarag, or "one who carries water." "-uk" translates as "god," but this is more like a "spirit of something" in Churuqian, not a being to be worshiped. So Ruduk would be 'god of dreams'. "-ug" translates as "child," so "Potirug" would be "flower child."

COMMON SURNAMES

Don't Drink This, Flower But Hideous, God Dreamer, Hawkdrop, House of Fish Eggs, Moon Eye, Pain Son, Sweet Like Cow, Water Droppers, Woodspear

Basically, anything that could have described a place, person, idea, or thing that would have seemed important or descriptive to Churuqians 100 years ago is fair game for surname conventions.

GHASSULIAN (TULKO)

Long before Babylon grew to its heights, the Ghassulians, an early, orc-dominated, nomadic culture, spanned the Mediterranean as a trading empire, founding colonies and opening new areas of exploration even as they expanded the boundaries of ancient magic. Archeologists say the Ghassulians may have invented a form of alphabetic writing, as opposed to the syllabic script of modern Babylonian, and spread this system through Erebu.

Though their original homeland was lost to the Shattering, and their colonies either conquered by Alexander or allied to and subsumed into Senekemet, this culture runs deep in many peoples around the world and prevails primarily in the city of Tulko on Azore, in the Black Sea nation of Tabaýa, and in Carthage, one of the three capitals of Senekemet. Ghassulians have a deep and abiding love for their

homeland(s), and tend to have a patriotic desire to defend it. The culture values technology and magic equally, seeing both as paths to knowledge and to prosperity. Ghassulian folk have strongly influenced the popular culture perception of orcs (especially in Neo Babylon), where they always seem to fill the role of wise counselor or philosopher-scientist.

Their language lilts across the tongue and ears with an almost musical quality that is enhanced by whistling consonants and vowels (originally due to orc tusks); this can make the language harder to master for non-native speakers. Ghassulian food is heavy in pulses and legumes, deeply flavored with spices and herbs. The food is neither spare nor spartan, but it is straightforward on the surface and complex in technique to create.

COUNTRIES WITH MAJORITY GHASSULIAN CULTURE

Tulko

CITIES WITH LARGEST GHASSULIAN POPULATIONS

Kiyn Carthage, Kiyn Tulko, Kiyn Tabako, Kiyn Rowan

GHASSULIAN NAMES

Ghassulian families tend to pass surnames matrilineally, and given names are often compounds of real words with specific meanings. Common prefixes are "Abd-" (servant of), "Mithon-" (gift of) "Ger" (stranger, foreign), and "Hanni-" (favored by)

COMMON GIVEN NAMES

Bomilcar, Gerfilo, Mago, Sophonisba, Hannibal, Mithocedar

COMMON SURNAMES

Barca, Gisco, Kanaan, Bel-El, Yehawmilk

PART V
GM GUIDE

GM Specific Rules

GM GRIT

If Grit for PCs represents their resolve, drive, and luck, the GM's Grit represents the stubbornness of the universe to resist their actions and their lack of luck. GMs tend to grain Grit when something is likely to cause nebulous bad consequences in the future, and lose Grit when players do things to prevent future problems before they have a chance to grow.

While the GMs job is to make interesting conflict and dramatic tension, GM Grit is designed to add some sense of cosmic fairness to whenever the GM wants to bend the world to the detriment of the PCs or meddle in the inner decisions of PCs. To that end, the GM can spend Grit as follows:

- The GM may spend Grit to benefit an NPC, as per PC Grit (see "Using and Losing Grit" on pg 25)
- The GM may spend 3 Grit to trigger a character's Impulse (see "Impulses" on pg 27) or Value (see "Values" on pg 29)
- The GM may spend 3 Grit to add a complication to a Success on a Test (but not a Dynamic or Critical Success), as if they failed the roll.
- The GM may spend 5 Grit to upgrade a PC's Failure to a Dynamic Failure.
- The GM may send 12 Grit to invoke a Community's Impulses (pg 80).
- The GM may spend 20 Grit to trigger a Catastrophe for a Community.

The GM gains Grit in the following way:

- The GM gains 3 Grit when a player regains Grit with an Impulse in Downtime.
- The GM gains 5 Grit at the end of each Downtime
- The GM begins the story with 5 Grit.

Players may reduce the GM Grit pool in the following way:

- Taking the Prepare for Trouble Downtime Action (see pg 37).

GM INVOKES

A GM may also spend Grit with an **Invoke** to encourage the player to do something, even if it doesn't line up with an Impulse or Value. The GM may offer any amount of Grit to perform a suggested action (such as encouraging PCs to have a conversation about a topic or decide to visit a Relation). If the PC accepts, they gain that much Grit.

FACTIONS

A major theme in Subversion is the relationship between individual action and the dynamics of powerful groups and systems. Factions provide a method for helping include these groups in your game, and keeping track of how the PCs negotiate the politics, intrigue, and conflicting goals of the different Factions.

Factions are most commonly introduced as part of Community creation (see pg 79), though the GM may introduce others as the game progresses.

LAWJACKS

In almost every campaign, one major Faction will be the Lawjacks (or a similar law enforcement organization for games set far away from Neo Babylon). The Lawjacks are metaphorically the faceless mask of a brutal system—but literally they're the law attempting to stamp down crime and catch criminals and subsersives.

Like any other Faction, the Lawjacks have an Power and Regard, though these have an additional effect based on their role in enforcing the law and status quo in Neo Babylon.

LAWJACK REGARD

The Regard of the Lawjacks represents how much slack they give to the Community. As Regard decreases, the Lawjacks devote more resources to cracking down on crimes in the community. As Regard increases, Lawjacks become more tolerant of minor offenses and work to protect the community from other disfavored Factions and prioritize crimes that are viewed as problems by the community.

Lawjack Regard decreases when there are major unresolved crimes, especially when the crimes receive significant public scrutiny. It increases when crimes are solved, or when effort is put into improving relationships (see "Interact With Relation" on pg 37).

Regard	Description	Effect
< -11	Martial Law: The Lawjacks have decided that the community is in active rebellion, and respond with immediate force to any signs of illegal behavior, effectively shutting down all public places.	All Community Resources are unavailable. Increase the Power of the Lawjacks by 4 as long as Regard remains below -10. Increase the fines for all crimes by 2. Characters unable to immediately pay are taken into custody.
-10 – -6	Aggressive Policing: The Lawjacks are applying substantial pressure to the community, arresting anyone they suspect as criminal or subversive on pretextual charges and holding them or sending them to the purgatorium for days or weeks.	Increase the Power of the Lawjacks by 2 as long as Regard remains between -6 and -10. Increase the fines for all crimes by 1.
-5 – -1	Suspicious: The Lawjacks regularly stop members of the community and search and interrogate them about ongoing issues. Small offenses are agressively fined.	Increase the Power of the Lawjacks by 1 for as long as Regard remains between -1 and -5.
0 – 5	Neutral: The Lawjacks are largely content to patrol and only intervene when faced with obvious signs of criminality.	No effect.
6 – 10	Protective: The Lawjacks are actively attempting to make your community a safe place, targeting their enforcement on outsiders making trouble. Small offenses are almost always let off with warnings.	Minor offenses are let off with warnings. Reduce the fortune cost of any fines by 3. Any Faction the community has a Regard of -5 or less towards has its Power reduced by 1.
> 11	Deferential: The Lawjacks are determined to remain in the good graces of the powers that be in the community. The Lawjacks actively seek to be helpful, even outside of law enforcement duties, and members of the community in good standing recieve strongly preferential treatment.	Reduce the fortune cost of any fines by 5. Any Faction the community has a Regard of -5 or less towards has its Power reduced by 2. The Lawjacks aid any investigations, providing +1d6 and Augment 3 on all Observation checks they help with.

LAWJACK POWER

Power	Description	Effect
1—2	Token Presence: A single lawjack, likely sent to this post as punishment for incompetence.	Ignore all fines less than 5 fortune.
3—4	Light Presence: A small outpost with regular patrols, mostly there to respond to major events.	Ignore all fines less than 3 fortune.
5—6	Normal Presence: Patrols are continuous, and Lawjacks are regularly policing for minor infractions.	No effect.
7—8	High Security: Nearly every public area of the community is constantly monitored, and response times are uniformly under a minute.	All concealment tracks against Lawjacks and targets they protect are decreased by 3. Increase the Illicit value of gear by 1 for the purposes of procurement.
9—10	Full Response: The full force of the Lawjacks is present, capable of taking on many nations' armies. High-tech drones, VTOLs, and battlemages are all in evidence.	All concealment tracks against Lawjacks and targets they protect are decreased by 6. Increase the Illicit value of gear by 2 for the purposes of procurement.

CRIMES AND FINES

All crimes in Neo Babylon are punishable by fines (see "The Cost of Justice" on pg 218). The table below lists typical fines, though the Babylonian legal code contains many modifiers that can increase or decrease the costs based on aggravating or mitigating circumstances (especially with the help of a talented lawyer).

Lawjacks are given wide discretion on whether to arrest or merely issue a citation when they witness a crime, discretion they exercise based on their estimate of the criminals ability to pay the fine (and thus avoid the need to be dragged to the purgatorium), and the Regard they have for the character and their community (no one seriously accuses them of strict impartiality).

Arrested characters may contest their guilt to the Arbiters The Arbiters of Marduk (pg 217). Successful uses of Humanities (Law) or Influence can reduce the fine, and if characters can demonstrably prove their innocence, they can get the fine dropped completely (possibly winning a token judgment against the Lawjacks for wrongful citations). For simple tasks, a single roll might be appropriate—for more elaborate trials a Progress Track and cinematic might fit the bill.

ENVOY DEFERENCE

Envoys maintain a privileged status under the law. When acting as the official envoy of a community (which typically requires clearly acting as themselves) they are exempted from many minor crimes. Reduce the fines to Envoys by 1, as long as they identify themselves as such.

THE PURGATORIUM

If a character is unable to pay the fine (including by taking a debt (see pg 94)), they may be sentenced to the purgatorium. While at the purgatorium, a character is treated as being Lower Caste, and must take the Maintain Lifestyle and Side gig Downtime Action each Downtime to work off their debt. If they fail to do so, they are deprived food and medical care, and take 3 irresistible Health damage and may not heal any Health damage.

Once sentenced to the purgatorium, the discharge and security of the debtor is the responsibility of that purgatorium. Reports of criminals breaking into purgatoriums to alter records and free debtors are not uncommon, though purgatoriums are incentived to deny such events lest they receive fewer debtors in the future—though rumors suggest that they share the identities of troublesome "discharged" debtors with each other to increase security on those who have escaped before.

EVADING JUDGMENT

When characters commit a crime and are not immediately arrested, they may still be charged with the crime. If the Lawjacks are confident in the guilt of the character, they may fine them in absentum, requiring the character to either pay the fine, contest the charge with an Arbiter, or go into hiding to avoid a later arrest from the Lawjacks.

If the evidence is insufficient, for most minor crimes the Lawjacks drop the investigation—the cost of pursuing it doesn't make sense with the potential to recoup the costs from the fine. For larger crimes, the Lawjacks may start a Downtime Concealment Track against the characters—set the starting Concealment based on the strength of evidence. Increase the Concealment by 3 each Downtime. When the concealment reaches 15, the case goes cold.

CRIMES AND LAWJACK REGARD

Regardless of whether a fine is payed, any crimes (or strong suspicion thereof) decrease the Regard of the Lawjacks. Decreased Regard with the Lawjacks increases the likelihood to be investigated for crimes, their inclination to drag you in for minor offenses, and their general demeanor. Major crimes, particularly targeting Lawjacks, are likely to affect your Base Regard—otherwise changes in Regard are only temporary.

Crime	Fine
"QoL" Crimes (loitering, jaywalking, noise complaints, public disorder)	1 Fortune
Trespassing	1 Fortune plus 1 for each caste level the location is above the trespasser's caste
Owning contraband gear	1 Fortune per illicit level of gear, plus confiscation of gear
Vandalism, theft, fraud, breach of contract, tortious interference	Twice the lost value or damages
Assault	2 fortune + pay lifestyle until the target is fully healed† (minimum one Downtime). Doubled for Lawjacks and other Authority Figures.
Manslaughter	Cost of targets lifestyle maintenance times 10†
Murder	Cost of targets lifestyle maintenance times 50†
Invasion of privacy/ slander/libel	Demonstrated damages

† 1 for Lower, 2 for Lower-Middle, 4 for Upper-Middle, 10 for Upper, 20 for Elite. Undercity caste are typically unprotected by the law, though exceptions exist when they have legal reasons to be in Neo Babylon (such as work, or when they're in a purgatorium).

OTHER FACTIONS: KISIRU NINTU

Most of Neo Babylon's established gangs go back decades and began as rivals fighting for turf. But in recent years, a new shadow has emerged. Manipulating the city's technological heartbeat to sow chaos and disorder, Kisiru Nintu are an enigmatic gang making powerful enemies all over town. Utilizing cutting-edge technology to conduct their nefarious deeds, Kisiru Nintu have small cells, strategically dispersed across Neo Babylon, with no apparent leadership hierarchy. Kisiru Nintu have mastered the art of deception by disguising advanced AI drones as seemingly harmless toys and mechanical animals, creating a formidable arsenal that blurs the lines between mischief and maleficence.

Under the guise of harmless pranksters, Kisiru Nintu weave a web of electronic intrigue, exploiting the city's reliance on technology to conduct their clandestine operations. From inconspicuous robotic insects gathering intelligence to seemingly innocent dolls and toys concealing destructive potential, the gang's mastery of tech, pushing the limits of autonomous indexes, they pose a unique challenge to the corporate status quo. Everyday citizens likely don't know they exist, but might also find themselves unwitting pawns in their technological chess game, as Kisiru Nintu disrupt investments and bottom lines with calculated precision.

As rumors of these elusive saboteurs, thieves, and code-breachers spread, the city's Lawjacks are scrambling to get any evidence or clues as to Kisiru Nintu's networks and communications. Their motives remain shrouded in mystery, and their actions are a constant reminder that as long as the world continues to get deeper in bed with cybertech, every beep, buzz, or hum could herald innovation or imminent danger.

Envoys all over Neo Babylon are finding Kisiru Nintu are willing to sell their services for discount prices when going against corporations. So those looking to hire digital muscle, for breaching or jumping or other tech needs, will find the Kisiru Nintu ready to wheel and deal.

Notable Relations

TELSHIN:

A third-generation elf born to De Broceliande parents and raised in the intricate web of Neo Babylon, Telshin has carved out a distinctive niche for himself as a member of Kisiru Nintu, spoke about in whispers. Renowned for his exceptional breaching skills, Telshin stands out among the gang's members as a hacker a cut above the others, exploiting the city's corporate heartbeat to sow chaos and confusion. Telshin's reputation as a breacher has grown alongside Kisiru Nintu's. His once-famed robotic corgi, Phantom, was the talk of the town, known for its charm and mischievous antics. But since Phantom adapted and struck out on its own, Telshin also adapted and now employs a variety of canine drones to aid him in his shenanigans, his advanced drones often adding an element of unpredictability to their endeavors.

Telshin's presence in Kisiru Nintu is marked by a blend of skill, audacity, and a keen understanding of the city's intricate networks. As a seasoned breacher, he has become a sought-after asset for those seeking digital prowess. His ability to seamlessly blend into the shadows of Neo Babylon's bustling streets, a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of the city, coupled with his affinity for canine drones, give him a distinctive edge in executing the Kisiru Nintu's clandestine operations. His evolution from running with Phantom to an entire fleet of robotic canines mirrors Kisiru Nintu's evolution as cyber mischief makers.

MAGUS:

With deep roots in Neo Babylon, Magus, has firmly established themselves as a wildcard member of Kisiru Nintu. Their unique skill set revolves around their extraordinary jumping skills, projecting their consciousness inside a variety of drones, and blurring the lines between autonomous indexes and full consciousness with finesse. A key asset within the gang, Magus is known for their uncanny dinosaur drones, which often alert the authorities that Kisiru Nintu is involved. The lifelike appearance of their prehistoric drones belies their advanced technology, creating a blend of nostalgia and innovation that captivates and confounds both allies and adversaries alike.

Magus's jumping ability, as well as their alacrity with constructing new and unique components, makes them perfect for infiltrating systems, gathering intelligence, and thieving with a level of precision that sets them apart. The symbiosis between Magus and their drones embodies the spirit of Kisiru Nintu's playfulness and effectiveness.

PHANTOM:

Phantom, an extremely advanced (some say self-aware) drone, in the charming shape of a robot corgi, is the adorable face of crime in Neo Babylon's underworld. Originally the companion of Telshin, Phantom's evolution into an independent entity showcases the ever-advancing possibilities of cyber autonomy. Phantom emerged as a distinct and trusted member of Kisiru Nintu, navigating the city's intricate networks with its endearing appearance and sophisticated weapons and gadgets.

Phantom's burgeoning autonomy and independence from its maker introduced a new and dynamic element to Kisiru Nintu's operations, as the gang has now begun to question its relationship to its ever-advancing drones, and what the future might be if cybertech's promise of completely artificial intelligence were to become a reality. Most of Kisiru Nintu's members agree that fully autonomous drones would no longer be bound to their makers or owners, but as for Phantom, its loyalty to the gang now transcends its original association with Telshin, and Phantom's presence is felt as more than just a technological tool. Telshin seems proud of this, and the two still work side by side often on important jobs.

Other Factions: Spring Street Takeout

Most communities of Neo Babylon center around turf, neighborhoods, or common space where they meet, rally, or live together. Parks, restaurant districts, mage colleges, and the like offer a single place where traditional communities develop unity and connection. The Springstreet Takeout, however, have proven that bonds between found families make a community just as well as shared space. Rather than operating from a single location, the Takeout is a roaming nomadic group of food trucks and assorted support vehicles that wind a path through the sections of the city.

Preceded by a band of motorcycle riding outriders, they arrive at night, flying under the Lawjack's radar, to set up and provide gourmet foodstuffs from all over the world to the eager populace of Neo Babylon. Membership in the Takeout grows and shrinks over time as people with no home base attach themselves to the convoy, then drop back out again once they find significant others, families, or opportunities as they traverse the sprawl. These lighthearted cooks, servers, and drivers are just simple providers of food and conversation, from different parts of the city, meeting the relational and culinary needs of a hungry city.

Unless you know the secret menu.

Spoken of in back corners of the cybernet, ordering select "off-menu" items triggers new dialogues and demeanors among the convoy. Uttering these secret phrases opens up access to roving freebooters who act as envoys do, ready to help in whatever capacity they can. They do this as thanks for hosting the Takeout as they move through. Often, the entire Takeout will band together to protect and help whoever orders from the secret menu. Every member of the Takeout, at one time or another, has needed someone to believe them, feed them, and give them shelter, and they are eager to return the gods' favor.

Notable Relations

MINNIE:

The Yeti proprietor of Minnie's Little Bites sells sliders and other diner foods from her Yettin-sized food truck. Most notable for her aesthetic cyberskin displaying her fur in a variety of colors and patterns, she is the technological wizard of the convoy. Whether providing overwatch with drones, jumping into vehicle to escape a tail, or directing the entire convoy like a symphony, Minnie is ever-present with common sense and fierce maternal instincts.

SAMMAEL:

The Orc cook of Anu's Tarts never does anything in half measures. Fiercely loyal, when he loves, he loves with his whole heart and when he's angry… things burn. An accomplished fire yojin, he will always be the first to fight and the last to run when there are people to be protected. Some freebooters use subtle and varied tools, but some prefer simple hammers. Sammael is a hammer, that is on fire.

GIDEON:

This former lawjack and veteran of the fae wars has a troubled past. He is a watchdog extraordinaire, able to pick out the smallest detail and slightest clue in a crime scene, when he's not slinging drinks at the Summoned Spirits truck. His past and present are creating conflicts and new opportunities for growth as he wrestles with his new role as a priest of Shamash.

LESTHUNE:

Les is a peaceful garden in a chaotic world. This is literally true as well, as Les drives a bus, converted into a verdant garden growing from within and a large lemon tree emerging from the roof. As a Baru of Ninurta, they focus on cultivating the food needed for the food trucks, healing those who have been injured, and performing dangerous and unorthodox experiments with lemons. They often speak to their twin brother, not present because he was lost in the fairy wars, but sometimes, people swear they have heard a response.

GRANDMA:

No one remembers the real name of the wizened old goblin who runs the Springstreet Takeout. Adopting the entire community as her family, they all just call her Grandma and she wouldn't have it any other way. Outwardly, she's a sweet old lady who runs her food truck (Tasteful Noods) and looks out for people. However under that exterior is a core of magesteel, and she will not let any member of her community come to harm.

RUMOR, RISK AND RUIN

Keeping the sense that the world keeps changing in ways beyond what the players see as part of the action can be a great benefit to making the world feel alive. To that end, Subversion uses Rumors, Risks, and Ruins to help GMs plot out narratives that the PCs may or may not interact with directly.

- **Rumor:** This is something the players may hear about or perhaps assume based on things they see. They might ring true or not, but don't seem urgent or directly affect the community.
- **Risk:** This is something the PCs may want to look into. It seems clear that if this isn't addressed, it will become a problem for the community. It may even be affecting some members of the community already.
- **Ruin:** When something dire threatens the community. This is an urgent problem that must be addressed or it will have long-lasting and potentially devastating effects on the community. The effects on the community are imminent or already clear. When a ruin is present, it is likely what the PCs will be dealing with in the action.

Published Episodes and Epics will often have Rumors, Risks, and Ruins that GMs can choose from to flesh out their games, though GMs may also create or add their own.

START THE CYCLE

As the players go throughout the Action and Downtime, start off by choosing 1-2 rumors (or a risk) and whether it is through relations, gossip, or observation, let your players hear about the rumor or risk that is going on in the background. This will keep

the players feeling like there are things happening in the world beyond just what they experience and they may even decide to investigate. Some players will go looking for rumors, and if they do, there is nothing wrong with giving out more!

BUILDING TENSION

After the first session, during Downtime, while the players are deciding what to do with their Downtime Actions, you'll want to start building tension. To do this, choose 1-2 rumors or risks (ones you've mentioned to them before) to escalate. Rumors become risks and risks become ruins. If ruins are not dealt with, the community will take the brunt.

Building tension up is done in secret, though be wary about building tension if you haven't dropped any rumors about that plot yet. Similarly, for the sake of timing, it is best not to give out a rumor and escalate it up in the same session. That said, if a player has an ability, or does some sleuthing, feel free to tell them about the building tension of a rumor or risk. That is what those abilities are there for!

EXAMPLE: GANG WAR

We want to have a plot hook where two or more gangs go to war. For this example, we'll use two gangs, the Death Kings and the 86ers. We'll use multiple rumors, and ideally, we won't build tension immediately, but we'll wait until a few of the rumors drop.

To start the plot off, we'll have the PCs hear about one of the following rumors:

- **Rumor #1:** "Did you hear? Josie stole Ollie's girl." (This rumor may or may not lead the players to investigate further, and it may not even register to the players as relevant to gangs or even as important.)
- **Rumor #2:** "Lots of kids talking about the 86ers. I heard one of the younger firebrands is making moves." (This seems totally disconnected from the first rumor.)
- **Rumor #3:** "Watch out for those guys wearing black. Those are Death Kings looking to expand territory." (Again, this doesn't seem related.)
- **Rumor #4:** "The yettin I've met around here all seem to have beef with the weirdos that live near Ravenar street. I heard one asking about a brother who joined some cult."

Risk: A bunch of kids were hurt when the 86ers and the Death Kings went at it during the street race last week. The Death Kings were the ones who threw the first punch, and now they say the high school is their turf. That is gonna piss off the 86ers boss.

Ruin: A full blown gang war has started. There seems to be not only one, but two factions of the 86ers versus the Death Kings – and each other. In the midst of this, the newer 86ers faction seems to have some religious fervor. And they've been heavily recruiting among the kids.

One of the newer recruits was the girlfriend of the Death Kings' boss, Majorite. And it looks like a bunch of yettin have joined up, too, which is upsetting the local yettin families. The old guard among the 86ers want their gang, and their turf, back. The Death Kings want to avenge this dishonor and have been using it as a pretext for taking more turf. And the new 86er faction, led by a young religious fanatic named Tarlesbad, seems to have further reaching nefarious plans (which can be a rumor for another plot, depending on how this one wraps up). If nothing is done, the community will tear itself apart, draw the attention of the lawjacks who will keep the peace through violence and punishment on the community, or someone close to the envoys may even be hurt or killed.

Setting Plot Hooks

To build a compelling plot hook, it is helpful to work backwards. First, start with the ruin. What will happen if the PCs let something get so bad that it has a big effect on their community? Not all rumors or risks need to become ruinous things, though. And not every ruin must be ruinous for the community; they could be disastrous for an NPC, a Faction, one of the players themselves, or the world at large. Once you have the end result, figure out how you might foreshadow and build it up. This will make the payoff seem worthwhile and sensible.

When creating risks, think of how this storyline affects a few people in the community that the PCs may know. Try to think of some concrete effects that may be happening that will only get worse if not addressed. Risks should be about spreading anxiety and tension in the community.

Finally, think of how to create whispers and signs of the impending doom in the form of rumors. At this stage, things shouldn't be affecting the community, or perhaps they only affect a fringe member, and most people shouldn't be taking it seriously. But there are a few people talking about it. And that is the key.

When it comes to rumors, you may want to create multiple rumors for the PCs to find. Even if they don't find all of them, they can add backstory for when players eventually do go looking for info.

Once you have your hook in the form of rumors, risks, and ruins, make some more of them! Change them up between relating to the PCs' dramatic hooks (see pg 93), community and player relations, Factions, community goals, or any other source of narrative grist you can come up with – just make them matter!

Even if PCs don't ever interact with the rumors or risks you have planned, that is OK. In fact, it can be really fun. If the PCs hear a rumor that two gangs are planning to fight it out over turf, but they decide not to get involved, let it happen. The rumor may become a risk where some of the community's kids are being recruited into the gangs. And if the PCs still don't get involved, perhaps one gang wins, and without the other gang to keep them in check, they become a new authority for the community. Alternatively, the gang that lost can just fade away and one of the Factions the PCs were familiar with just fades away. The actual consequence isn't as important as that there ARE consequences for players either getting involved or not.

Your players WON'T be able to address all the hooks. That is good! PCs should have to pick and choose what things they devote time to and what they can't, receiving the repercussions of both! Trust us, this will lead to great stories and good personal moments between PCs.

Allies and Adversaries

In the PC's story, they'll encounter a wide range of other characters, be they friendly, adversarial, or somewhere in between. In the world of Neo Babylon, this can range from a lawjack detective to a dangerous magical creature, a corporate executive to a spirit of justice. Below is a variety of NPCs that PCs might encounter in their adventures. GMs should feel free to use and adapt them as matches the story—there's far more diversity of potential adversaries than can be listed in one chapter, and adding uniqueness and character can make different individuals with similar abilities feel distinct and novel!

POWER

Many of these characters cover a wide range of potential NPCs, with varying abilities, influence, and threat. This is represented by their **Power**. Whenever Power (abbreviated as **P**) is listed in an ability or attribute of an NPC, you can adjust it to represent the danger of that particular entity.

Power typically ranges from 1-10, from NPCs that are only impactful in large numbers to beings that are among the most powerful on the world. NPCs of similar ability to the Envoys typically have powers between 3-5.

Power should not be taken as a straight measure of challenge to the PCs—a world class physicist on the run may be easier to find than a missing pet, and an incompetent buffoon intent on vengeance may be more trouble than an ancient mountain spirit content to mostly ignore the goings-on of people. Power typically measures an NPC's ability when they bring their full abilities to bear on their best skills—GMs should gauge their narrative challenge based on how likely that is to be the case.

ADJUSTMENTS

All NPC blocks have a default Power. Generally speaking, a GM can adjust the Power—each point of additional Power increases all defenses by one, initiative by one, and Health and Animity by 3 (or vice versa if decreasing Power). Many NPC descriptions have an adjustment section that provides additional information for adjusting Power.

KEY SKILLS

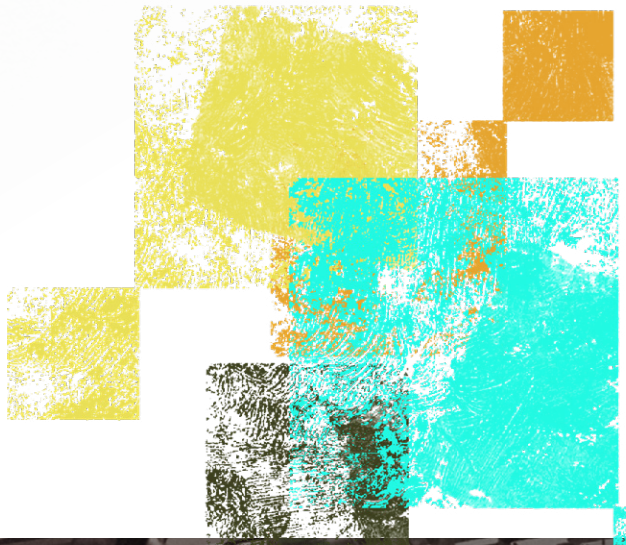
Key skills represent the primary skills of an NPC. An NPC rolls a number of dice in their Key Skills equal to their Power, with a bonus equal to half their Power (if Power is less than 3, they roll 3d6 with one instance of Dulled at Power 2 and 2 instances of Dulled at Power 1). Some NPCs have skills at a higher or lower ability than would be indicated by their Power—this is listed as a + or – next to the skill. If an NPC needs to make a Test that is not one of their key skills, use dice equal to half their Power with an attribute bonus of a quarter of their Power.

KEY ABILITIES

NPCs often have key abilities. These are the default, or go-to, abilities the NPC will use first or most often in any given circumstance. They may also be unique or particularly effective abilities that NPC possesses.

KEYWORDS

Certain characters may have keywords that act as shorthand to let the GM know how to use them, but may also act like special rules the characters suffer or benefit from. For example, if a character has the fearless keyword, they are immune to fear and intimidation, giving the GM an idea of how to roleplay and use them, but also granting the character the benefits associated with that keyword. Some keywords are more descriptive, such as elf, human, Undercity, beast, or elite, while others, such as fearless and ethereal, have particular rules and usage.



LAWJACKS

Lawjacks are the interchangeable and anonymous face of authority in Neo Babylon, providing security for both the city proper as well as serving as security guards for most Neo Babylonian corporations. For more on Lawjacks, see The Lawjacks (pg 218) .

LAWJACK

The standard lawjack is equipped to be immune to civilian legal weapons, and stands anonymous and intimidating to ensure the laws and status quo of Neo Babylon are maintained.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	15	10	13	12	12

Power 3. Armor 12

KEY SKILLS

Melee Combat, Observation.

KEY ABILITIES

Stun Baton 3d6+2; 3d6 electric damage, nonlethal.

ADJUSTMENTS

Lawjacks are by design consistent and replaceable—those who excel find themselves reassigned to other divisions (serving as detectives or secure response officers). Increased lawjack response typically relies on quantity instead of quality; when determining the standard lawjack response add one lawjack for each point of Power the lawjacks have in the Community (see pg 246).

LAWJACK DETECTIVE

Lawjack detectives are charged with following up on crimes, as well as infiltrating and uncovering subversive and criminal organizations. See Evading Judgment (pg 248) for more details.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	20	14	15	13	13

Power 4. Armor 5. Adamant 5

Key Skills: Ranged Combat, Melee Combat, Observation, Deception, Influence, Humanities

KEY ABILITIES

Taser 4d6+2; 10m range; 2d6 electric damage, nonlethal.

SECURE RESPONSE OFFICER

For almost all situations, the heavy Armor and stun batons of the lawjacks are enough to ensure control of the situation. When it isn't, the lawjacks deploy SRTs—secure response teams. SRTs are filled with elite lawjacks armed with firearms.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	20	15	13	15	14

Power 4. Armor 12

KEY SKILLS

Ranged Combat, Melee Combat, Observation, Physicality, Piloting

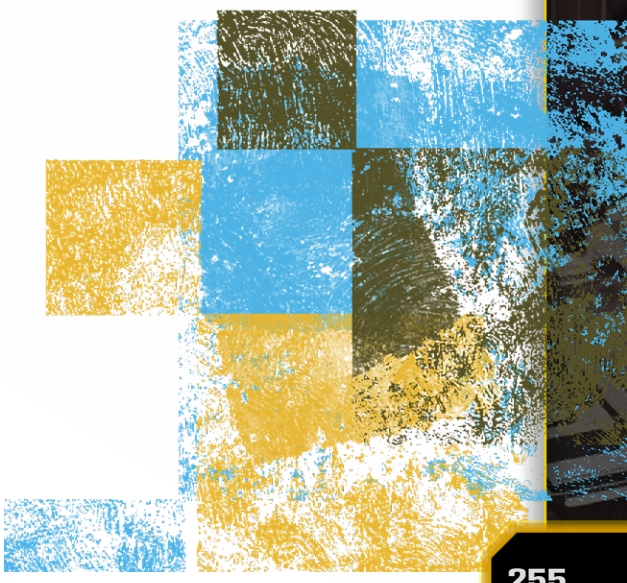
KEY ABILITIES

Rifle (Assault) 5d6+3 (Reliable 2); 200m range; 5d6 physical damage; Frightening 8, Multi-target.

ADJUSTMENTS

Like other lawjacks, SRTs largely adjust to their needs by scaling the number of officers on site, rather than the quality. SRTs are typically teams of 4 deployed via Armored helicopter (see pg 113). In response to riots or other similar disturbances where overwhelming force is deemed necessary to disrupt less dangerous forces, SRTs may be primarily armed with Taser Rifles (see pg 109).

SRTs are always deployed in large enough number to subdue the known opposition with overwhelming force. Threats that an SRT cannot deal with are generally considered the domain of the Ukkim's military response, and are met by Battlemages and Gunmages (see below).



UKKIM

BATTLEMAGE

Before modern weapons, individual Battlemages would devastate armies, flying high above the battlefield raining down fire and lightning, impervious to almost all weapons. While modern technology has weakened their dominance, a Battlemage is still a formidable opponent and remains a core part of Neo Babylon's military, prepared to fight against any threat that escalates beyond the abilities of lawjacks to handle, stemming from foreign nations or insurgents and rebels.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	30	13	15	15	17

Power 7. Armor 10 (15 Electrical). Adamant 5

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Observation, Physicality

KEY ABILITIES

Sustained Spells: Battlemages use mana magic to maintain powerful sustained spells on themselves to protect them in battle (see "Enduring Spell" on pg 164). A prepared Battlemage may sustain 3 of the following spells as a Free Action each Round:

- **Absorbing Ditty:** Gain +9 Physical Armor.
- **Levitate:** Fly 30m as a Free Action each Round.
- **Kinetic Whip:** When sustaining, may attack character in **T** range for 4d6 damage. Gain +4 Guard.
- **Invisibility:** Unable to be seen. Gain +5 on Stealth Tests.
- **Corrosive Defense:** Anyone who does damage to you at touch range takes 2d6 corrosive damage +1d6 fire damage. Gain +5 Corrosive Armor.
- **Grounding Ditty:** Battlemage and up to 3 companions gain +5 Electrical Armor.
- **Heat Shield:** +8 Fire and Cold Armor. Those who damage you at T range take 4d6 fire damage.

Arcane Caster: Battle mages are arcane casters, and as such, must spend a Main Action harmonizing a bar of mana before they can take an action to cast a spell. Battlemages may spend 3 Grit to harmonize as a Backup Action. The typical Battlemage can harmonize up to 3 bars of magic in a single school.

School Mastery: All Battlemages have a specialization in (at least) one school. As a Free Action, a Battlemage may spend 1 Grit to add an additional bar of their school specialty to boost a spell (but not cover its main cost).

Battle Magic: Battlemages rely on their sustained spells, Armor, and guards to protect them while they harmonize devastating spells to decimate their opponents. Most Battle mages have one preferred attack school, though in a pinch can do weaker spells from other schools. A few common Battlemage offensive spells:

- **Five Finger Force Flick (Force):** 1 Force Bar. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of target within 50m. On a Success, do 4d6 damage and target is moved 20m in a direction of your choice. Each additional bar gives +3d6 damage.
- **Somatic Poison (Chemical):** 1 Chemical Bar. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of a target within 10m. On a Success, target takes 2d6 metabolic damage a turn for next 3 Rounds. Each additional bar adds 2d6 damage each turn.
- **Disintegrate (Chemical):** 2 Chemical Bars. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of a target within 10m. Do 8d6 damage, and give an additional consequence if reduced to zero Health. Each additional bar does +3d6 damage.
- **Lightning Bolt (Electrical):** 1 Storm Bar. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of a target within 50m. On a Success do 5d6 Electrical damage, ignoring Armor. Each Bar adds another target within 10m of the original target.
- **Fireball (Fire):** 1 Fire Bar. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of all targets within 10m of a point within 50m. On a Success, do 3d6 Fire damage to that target. Each additional bar does +2d6 fire damage.

ADJUSTMENTS

While every Battlemage is deadly, some are deadlier than others. When adjusting the Power of a Battlemage, apply the following effects:

- Adjust the maximum number of bars of magic by one for every two points of change in Power. This changes the number of available sustained spells, the strength of sustained spells, and the maximum number of bars on offensive spells.

GUNMAGE

Gunmages are the elite guard of the battlemages, tasked with keeping them safe and engaging the enemies while the mage prepares their devestating magic. While the ranks of gunmages who wield the eponymous mage guns has shrunk as only the most powerful of artificers can compete with modern firearms, gunmages have adapted to modern times, with many gunmages relying on conventional firearms, as well as learning to pilot and control modern military vehicles to transfer their fellow gunmages and battlemage charges quickly across the battlefield.

CORPORATE ACTORS

CORPORATE FIXER

The Corporate fixer is the consummate jack of all trades—one part diplomat, one part provocateur, and one part spy. Whatever the problem, the fixer will find the solution. Sometimes the solution is a mutually beneficial deal negotiated with the envoys, sometimes it bulldozes through the interests of the local community, and sometimes it threads the needle between two opposing factions. The only constant is the solution is good for the bottom line.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	20	10	15	13	13

Power 4. Armor 2. Adamant 5

KEY SKILLS

Influence, Deception, Observation, Physicality, Ranged Combat

KEY ABILITIES

Find Pressure Point: Roll Observation (4d6+2) vs Vigilance of a PC. On a Success, determine an offer that advances one of the PC's or their Community's Values, Impulses, goals, or important relations. If the PC declines that offer, they take 2d6 Animity damage.

A Better Offer: When attempting to use a contact with a Regard equal to or lower than the Fixer's Power, the GM may spend 3 Grit to have them already be in the Fixer's pocket. Increase any Ask contrary to the Fixer's interest by 5, and they may report on the PC's actions or attempt to misdirect them as appropriate.

Taser: 4d6+2; 10m range; 2d6 electric damage, nonlethal.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Fixers range from sleazy discount lawyers to elite corporate troubleshooters, with abilities to match their price.

- For each point of change in Power, increase Health by 2, Animity by 3, and all defenses by one.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
30	25	18	14	17	14

Power 6. Armor 10 (15 Fire). Adamant 8

KEY SKILLS

Ranged Combat, Melee Combat, Observation, Physicality, Piloting

KEY ABILITIES

Mage Gun (see pg 105): 6d6+3; 50m range; 6d6 electrical damage (subject to preference of the gunmage).

Hold the Ranks: All allies within 2m of the Gunmage gain +2 Guard, to a maximum of the guard of the Gunmage.

Elite Training: When the GM spends Grit on behalf of a gunmage, they gain the following additional effects:

- Reduce Health or Animity damage by 5
- Move 10m as a Free Action
- Increase their initiative for a scene by 10

ADJUSTMENTS

While the gunmages that attend to battlemages are universally well trained, more junior gunmages are often placed on security for less sensitive aspects of the Neo Babylonian government and military. In contrast, the most talented gunmages serve as elite operatives for the Ukkim, able to move deep behind enemy lines and leave a trail of death and destruction:

- For each 2 point adjustment in Power, adjust the strength of the Mage gun by 2d6 damage (reducing the bar of charge). Gunmages of Power 4 or lower are equipped with a pistol or rifle.
- For Gunmages piloting vehicles, use the abilities from Combat Jumpers (below).

Combat Jumper

While the bulk of corporate security is contracted out to Lawjacks, many corporations maintain their own fleet of drones and vehicles armed with "defensive" weapons controlled by skilled jumpers, able to use them to transport important supplies, collect intelligence on opposing factions, and deal with those attempting to put a dent in their own bottom line.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	15	14	15	14	12

Power 4. Armor 2. Adamant 5

KEY SKILLS

Piloting, Observation, Ranged Combat

KEY ABILITIES

Drones and Vehicles: The Jumper has one or more drones available to them, though they can only directly control one at a time (and typically arange for other drones to be in reserve or provide teamwork). Choose a drone or vehicle from the chart below.

Drone/ Vehicle	Speed	Health	Size	AI	Notes
Aerial Drone	6	6	0	4	Weapon Mount
Ground Drone	3	12	1	4	5 Armor, Weapon Mount
Aquatic Drone	3	10	1	4	5 Armor, Weapon Mount
Armored Car	6	32	4		10 Armor
Armored Truck	5	50	6	1	12 Armor, Weapon Mount
Security Boat	4	60	8	1	12 Armor, Weapon Mount
Armored Helicopter	7	40	8	4	8 Armor, Weapon Mount
VTOL	11	40	9	4	Acceleration 5, 4 Armor, Weapon Mount

Remote Targeting: When using a weapon mounted on a drone or vehicle, the Combat Jumper rolls 4d6+2 (Reliable 3). Choose one of the following options for any vehicle with a weapon mount:

- **Taser (Thorn Darts):** 2d6+3 electrical damage (10m range), and does 1d6 electrical damage each Round until removed as Main Action.

  Requires TN 13 Observation check to notice weapon when not deployed.
- **Taser Rifle:** 5d6+3 Electric Damage, Nonlethal (100m).
- **Marksman Rifle:** 5d6 Physical damage (100m) Increase Range by 100m for each aim action.

Breach Spikes: The Security Rating to hack the Jumper's gear is equal to their Vigilance. Whenever a breacher fails an Exploit or Breaching Roll against a drone or vehicle you control they lose 3 Concealment and gain one instance of Dulled on all Tech rolls targeting you for the remainder of the scene.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

- For each point of Power above 4, add one Armor to any vehicles they own.
- Generally speaking, VTOLs are always controlled by Jumpers of Power 6 or above.

Corporate Breacher

If you have computer systems with valuable information on them, or controlling critical systems, you have two choices: take them offline, or keep your own Breachers around to make sure no one is sniffing around. Corporate Breachers are adept at finding those who aren't supposed to be on a system, finding devices nearby that shouldn't be nearby, and coordinating responses to incidents.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	15	10	15	11	11

Power 4.

KEY SKILLS

Tech, Observation

KEY ABILITIES

Secure Domain: All devices the breacher is an Authorized User on may use the Breacher's vigilance as their Security Rating.

Breaching: On a successful Breaching roll (4d6+2 Tech), the Breacher removes 5 firewall from the device. When firewall reaches 0, the Breacher gains complete access to the device.

Signal Sentinel: Whenever the Breacher succeeds on a Breaching Roll against a device being used by a target with an active concealment track against the breacher, decrease that concealment track by 3.

Scan: As a Main Action, give +2d6 on all attacks by allies against a visible target or a target carrying items you have breached.

IC Queen: As a Main Action, you may boost the rating of IC on your system by 3.

Gag: Make a Tech Test. Any devices of your choice with a Security Rating less than your result treat their range as **T** for all actions they take until the end of the next Round. On a Dynamic Success, this lasts for the next 10 Rounds; on a Critical Success this lasts as long as the device is within 1000m of you.

FREEBOOTER

Criminals for hire, Freebooters are most commonly used as deniable assets by corporations and other wealthy patrons. Technically not treated any better than other criminals, they often find their fines, when caught, mysteriously paid by anonymous benefactors, wishing them to remain silent about who may have hired them.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	20	14	15	15	13

Power 4. Armor 2. Adamant 5

KEY SKILLS

Any 3

KEY ABILITIES

Pick up to 2

Auto Pistol: 4d6+2, 3d6 AP 1, Reliable 2, Multitarget

Breaching: On a successful Breaching roll (4d6+2 Tech), the Breacher removes 5 firewall from the device. When firewall reaches 0, the Breacher gains complete access to the device.

Sneaky: Whenever a character would reduce concealment against the target, decrease the amount of concealment lost by 2.

Tough: Whenever the target would take damage, decrease that damage by 3 (minimum 1).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Freebooters come from all walks of life and will often have abilities from other statblocks or paradigms.

OTHER DENIZENS OF NEO BABYLON

SHADOW CASTE ASSASSIN

The Shadow Caste predates Neo Babylon—by some tellings it existed long before the Shattering, its earliest forms fighting against the eastward expansion of Babylon. Blending mysticism, secrecy, and a relentless drive for perfection in the craft, the Shadow Caste have a carefully cultivated reputation as the preeminent assassins in Neo Babylon, a reputation that their most elite members clearly deserve.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	20	18	15	17	15

Power 5. Armor 2. Adamant 2

KEY SKILLS

Physicality, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, Magic Arts, Deception, Observation

KEY ABILITIES

Poisoned

Dagger: Make

a melee attack (5d6+3) vs a target. On a Success, do 1d6+4 damage (AP 5). If the target takes any damage, they take 1d6 metabolic and Animity damage at the beginning of their turn each Round for the next 5 Rounds.

Ambush: Gain Augment 5 on all attacks in the Surprise Round.

Beneath Notice: While remaining perfectly stationary, spotting the Shadow Caste assassin requires beating a TN set by a Magic Arts Test (5d6+3).

Empty Stance: When holding a Melee Attack action, the assassin gains Augment 5 and may move 3m as part of the action.

Fill the Void: As a Backup Action, make a Magic Arts (5d6+3) Test vs Aegis of any targets within 50m. On a Success, move the target 10m towards the assassin.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

While the Shadow Caste has a strong tradition of Void Yojin members, there are a wide range of different approaches assassins take—ranging from cybered up snipers, expert mage hunters, tech focused demolitionists, or subtle poisoners.

BARU CHOSEN

Not all Baru are "chosen", able to make a direct divine connection to a god—but those that do often rise through the ranks, becoming heads of their own temples or otherwise taking important positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Chosen

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	20	11	12	10	13

Power 3.

Noah Ghuy

There is no place in Neo Babylon, not even the Undercity, where knowing the law and having a credential to throw around isn't helpful. That's where Noah Ghuy comes in. He stands as a distinguished figure in undistinguished places, known not only for his prowess in the legal realm but also as a respected ace in the hole for the city's envoys. A Chaldani orc, Noah's journey has been shaped by the powerful intersection of influence and intellect. He dwells in the upper-middle caste, which affords him opportunities to influence systems as a formidable lawyer and advocate for justice, but also embodies the values of the envoys he represents.

Who he was before he took the name "Noah Guy" is ane's guess, but he navigates the intricate legal landscape with a mantra ingrained in his approach: "Never throw the first punch, throw the last." Both legally and physically, this philosophy underscores his commitment to diplomacy and strategic thinking, ensuring that conflicts are resolved with finesse before brute force. A Greaser at heart, Noah understands the delicate balance between societal structures and the need for resistance, using his legal acumen to challenge oppressive forces in Neo Babylon. In quieter moments, he finds solace in the simplicity of life, cherishing the sentiment that "nothing beats a home cooked meal made with love."

Yet, beneath the veneer of a respectable lawyer and envoy, Noah Ghuy loves stimulation in the thrill of legal battles and strategic maneuvers that keep him on his toes, while his addiction to trashy TV often causes him to become overly involved in fictitious and staged narratives. Noah's dynamic persona as both a legal luminary and a connoisseur of the simple pleasures extends far beyond the courtroom as a revered representative for the Envoys.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
35	25	12	15	12	13

Power 5. Armor 2

KEY SKILLS

Melee Combat, Influence, Deception, Humanities

KEY ABILITIES

Objection!: Noah can spend a grit and a Backup Acton to reduce one of a target's defenses against his actions by 3. Their defense returns to normal after his next turn ends. If he uses a Main Action, the target's defense is reduced against his allies' actions as well as his own.

Cross Examination: Noah can generate a max of 6 pressure points. He gains one whenever he performs a Charm or Deescalate action as well as when he rolls a Dynamic or Critical success against an opponent's Vigilance. These can be used on a 1 to 1 basis to lower the target's Vigilance.

Well Studied: Noah has Reliable 3 on Humanities checks and Deception checks against him are at -5.

The Gilded Priestess of Ishtar

In the sacred halls of the tallest temple of Ishtar in Neo Babylon, a figure of majestic grace and golden plumage stands as a beacon of hope and compassion. High Priestess Anastasia Baro Dakaras, a tall, bronze-skinned Harmaku, commands not only the respect of her fellow Baru but also radiates a warmth that transcends the confines of her avian form.

Hailing from an esteemed Harmaku lineage, Anastasia rivals the towering stature of Yetin, with her golden plumage and tan and skin being the hallmarks of the so-called "gilded" mothers.

As with most of her kin, she was raised Chaldani, but Anastasia's roots are deeply intertwined with both Acape-Anya and Neo Babylon itself. As a high-ranking Baru, Anastasia enjoys and thrives in the upper-middle echelons of society, her upbringing shaped by the teachings and responsibilities bestowed upon her by the revered temple. But she also has been known to step outside her glowing lane, at risk to herself and her reputation - though the reasons she does so are known only to herself and Ishtar.

Anastasia holds a steadfast commitment to safeguarding the well-being of the city's youth, so expect her to call in favors or be willing to bargain when children are in danger. With an unwavering dedication to aiding the less fortunate, Anastasia extends a helping wing to those in need, and will often decide to help or withhold help, if she thinks she can spur an individual's personal growth.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
18	30	12	12	15	18

Power 3.

KEY SKILLS
Magic Arts, Influence

KEY ABILITIES
Voice of Assurance: Anastasia speaks an assuring suggestion to a target within 10m. Decrease the value of any Ask she makes to the target by 3. If they do what she suggesst, any skill rolls they make before her next turn towards her suggestion gain +1 dice and are Inspired. If they reject her suggestion, both her and the target take 2 Animity damage.

Steward of Ishtar: Pick any number of targets within 50m. Anastasia gain Inspired and Reliable 3 on any action made to assist them for the next five Rounds. For the next 24 hours, if she takes any action against them or intentionally allows them to come to harm, she takes 3d6 Animity damage.

Ishtar's Desires: Roll Magic Arts (5d6+4) vs Aegis on a target she is engaged in conversation with. On a Success, she learns the Value, Impulse, goal, or positive Relation that is most salient to them at the moment.

KEY SKILLS
Magic Arts, Influence, Humanities

KEY ABILITIES
Sacred Magic: The Chosen can channel sacred magic. Sacred spells produce dissonance—each point of dissonance requires a Main Action to dispel, or else the character takes 3 irresistible Animity damage.

Sacred Mantle: Each Chosen has access to at least one mantle. They may cast any spells from that mantle.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIATIONS
More powerful chosen (Power 6 or more) gain access to a second Mantle, as they gain a deeper understanding of the power they're connected to. The very most powerful chosen (Power 9) gain mastery over all the aspects of their connected power, gaining access to a third mantle.

CULTIST OF ENKI

By some accounts, Enki was once the head of the Babylonian Pantheon, the bearer of the gifts of civilization and life. According to the Baru, Enki grew bitter that the people he created turned to Marduk, and retreated from them, forswearing his domains of cultivation and authority and becoming solely a god of nature and the depths. In the Baru's telling, this led Enki out of balance, slowly descending into madness, becoming less than a god.

The story is different according to the Cultists of Enki. Enki learned of a path towards true power from the elder god Abzu, which he had trapped when first establishing the world. Enki seeks to control the domain of nature, bringing its power of creation to bear on our world, shutting it off from the other powers. According to the Cult of Enki, this would purge the corruption of the other gods, leaving a world where all those remaining would be free of the other gods and influence from their realm. Baru scholars who take this aim seriously have a darker

vision of what success would be—a dark primal reality metaphysically inhospitable to being changed by ideas of Law, Justice, Love, and Knowledge.

Regardless of the nature of the world they seek, the cult of Enki channel their God, or whatever Enki has become, to help prepare the path for his plan. Operating in secret, those that oppose them often find themselves subject to mysterious deaths—seemingly exposed to the harsh environs of the deepest oceans.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	25	12	12	12	15

Power 4.

KEY SKILLS
Magic Arts, Deception

KEY ABILITIES
Sacred Magic: The Cultist can channel sacred magic. Sacred spells produce dissonance—each point of dissonance requires a Main Action to dispel, or else the character takes 3 irresistible Animity damage.

Gather Depths: Dissonance 2. The Cultist channels the power of the deepest ocean. Those within 100m feel a deep pressure and darkness, as if they were plunged deep into the ocean (though outside observers notice nothing). Each usage of this ability increases the effect of this ability by one step on the following scale:

- None (Normal Pressure). No effect.
- Mild (As if at the bottom of a deep pool). -1 on all tests.
- Moderate (As if diving to the biological limit for free diving). -3 on all tests.
- Severe (A crushing pressure, seemingly seeking to destroy you.) -5 on all tests.

This ability lasts 5 Rounds after completion of the spell.

Call Forth the Deepest Power Dissonance 1. The Cultist channels the power of the deepest ocean, making a Sacred Arts (4d6+2) vs Aegis Test. On a Success, this does damage based on the current pressure (either natural or from Gather Depths, above):

- None (Normal Pressure). 1 damage.
- Mild (As if at the bottom of a deep pool). 1d6 Metabolic damage.
- Moderate (As if diving to the biological limit for free diving). 3d6 Metabolic damage.
- Severe (A crushing pressure, seemingly seeking to destroy you). 6d6 Metabolic damage.

Incite Beast: Dissonance 1. Target a non-sapient animal within 10m with Magic Arts (4d6+2) vs the animal's Aegis (or opposed by their owner's Piloting, if domesticated). On a Success, the animal becomes hostile towards a target of the Cultist's choice within 100m.

Enki's Gift: The Cultist does not need light to see, can breathe water, and is immune to the effects of pressure (this makes them immune to Gather Depths and Call Forth the Deepest Power).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIATIONS
Cultists of Enki come from all walks, and often possess other skills besides their magical talents. Add skills and gear as necessary to cover their other roles. Some Cultists have developed other abilities from the Mantle of Nature, or unique spells derived from their connection to Enki.

SYNDICATE ENFORCER

As the center of the world economy, Neo Babylon pulls in people from across that world. Many of those people brought with them ties to criminal syndicates of their origin, which established themselves as ways for these new communities to protect themselves against other criminals and the powers that be that often dismissed or discriminated against them. The most notable among them is the Europan Bravia, with strong roots among Europan and Acape Anya immigrants— but others exist, protecting or plaguing their respective communities, depending on your point of view.

Enforcing the goals of the syndicates are their enforcers—deadly members who threaten those who don't accept the clout of the syndicate, and make good on that threat for those who ignore them.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
30	20	12	12	15	13

Power 4. Armor 5

KEY SKILLS
Melee Combat, Physicality, Ranged Combat, Influence

KEY ABILITIES
Threaten: The enforcer makes an Influence Test vs Vigilance. On a Success do 8 Animity damage. If the target capitulates to the threat, decrease the damage by half.

DICHORO

Churuq. A human with Churuqian background was out of place, but grew up on stories, shows, music, and books glorifying the mages of old and how gifted casters make the world bend to their will. She binged every bit of corporate media about heroic mages, daydreamed about being one of them, and spent all of her money from summer jobs and chores on buying (mostly worthless) trinkets from the cybernet claiming to have some magical power. "Magical" merch from her favorite shows filled her teenage room. She studied everything she could, did everything she could to learn, but eventually, she had to put that behind her to scrape by and eek out a life for herself and her family once she aged out of school and couldn't afford to go any further.

And then it happened. Something unlocked in her and all her magic study clicked while she was a contestant on a game show (under the assumed name Dichoro). As Neo Babylon watched live, lights danced all around her as the camera watched, earning her the direct attention of corporate mage scouts. She was put through various mage colleges and emerged a salaried corpo mage. When she realized that her talent, training, and popularity were peculiar, she went freelance, and now exists in Neo Babylon as Dichoro, the freebooter celebrity mage.

Dichoro coaches other corpo mages on retreats, is always in high-demand at official events, and if you see her show up unexpectedly, it is best to be afraid. If she has been called in, lots of money has been spent and Versee always gives their money's worth.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	30	18	15	14	18

Power 6. Armor 2. Adamant 2

KEY SKILLS
Magic Arts, Deception, Influence

KEY ABILITIES
Lights, Camera, Action!: While sustaining this spell, you may take an Interrupt Action to roll Magic Arts vs Aegis of a target within 50m. On a Success the target gains two instances of Dulled on all Tests involving vision until the end of their turn. Any target with closed eyes gains +5 Aegis on that roll.

Curtain Call: Dichoro can shroud a radius up to 50m in darkness imposing a -4 penalty to observation in the area. She can also use her MAgic Arts (6d6+3) to perform a Divert Action (see pg48).

Laser Light Show: Dichoro can attack with a laser.Roll Magic Arts vs Aegis, on a Success, deal 4d6 damage, and all attacks against the target until the end of your next turn get +2d6.

Light Tseru: Dichoro carries a Light Tseru and can forgo harmonizing on a spell by using it.

Auto Pistol: 4d6+2 vs Guard; 3d6 Physical Damage, AP 1, Reliable 2, Multitarget.

Knife: 4d6+2 vs Guard; 1d6+2 Physical Damage, AP 5.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS
Different syndicates have different styles, and even among the syndicates, enforcers have differing preferences and skills.

GANGER
In the Undercity, laws are seldom enforced, leading to rule by whichever gang can claim a certain segment of turf. Fights and gang wars are common, vying for whatever power and resources filter down into the undercity.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	10	11	11	12	10

Power 2. Armor 5

KEY SKILLS
Ranged Combat, Melee Combat

KEY ABILITIES
Auto Pistol: 3d6+1 vs Guard; 3d6 Physical Damage, AP 1, Dulled 5.

Crowbar: 3d6+1 vs Guard; 2d6+3 Physical Damage, Dulled 5.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS
Gangers often possess a hodgepodge of weapons, representing whatever they can get their hands on.

GUTTERWITCH

While most mages attend the arcane colleges at Neo Babylon, engaging in years long courses of study to master their abilities, others, by choice or lack of opportunity, develop their arcane abilities independently, working off of scraps of lore they can scrounge and their own experimentation. Compared to collegiate mages, Gutterwitches often only focus on a single college, learning tricks related to that specific type of energy.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	20	10	13	13	15

Power 4. Armor 2

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts

KEY ABILITIES

Arcane Caster: Gutterwitches are arcane casters, and as such, must spend a Main Action harmonizing a bar of mana before they can take an action to cast a spell. Gutterwitches can typically cast up to two bars on spells in their school of choice—most (but not all) gutterwitches are limited a single school)

Sustained Spells: Gutterwitches often sustain spells on themselves to provide some protection or ongoing benefit. Sustaining a spell requires a Backup Action to maintain after casting.

Riffing: Gutterwitches often learn by experimenting, and are talented at developing novel uses of their abilities (see "Riffing" on pg 63). For each harmonized bar, pick one of the following effects:

- 2d6 damage
- 4 Armor
- +1d6 bonus on a Test
- +3 Defenses

THE NEON WITCH

In the vibrant and eclectic Arcane Alley, where gutterwitches go to procure cheap, rare, or illicit magical goods and services in the Undercity, there resides a captivating woman known as Neon Witch. Nynaeve Inannayan, the proprietor of Nynaeve's Curios and Concoctions, a whimsical magic shop adorned with neon lights and eclectic decorations, is more than just a merchant of enchanted items; she's reads fortunes, slings spells, and a seeks out the deeper mysteries that weave through the tapestry of reality. All from the comfort of her shop.

Nynaeve is always on the lookout for rare magical ingredients, leading her to offer quests for supplies that can lead to unexpected connections and adventures. Envoys from all over may find themselves involved in various tasks, or become targets, when Nynaeve's shop draws the attention of rivals or adversaries.

She's never open about her mysterious past, but she's wanted in the overcity, possibly for her gambling debts, but there are other far more dangerous aspects of her time before the Undercity.

Envoys take note: visiting Nynaeve for a fortune reading can result in unexpected twists of fate, being enlisted to aid someone in dire circumstances predicted by her accurate rituals, or perhaps becoming the target of ill fate themselves. She takes no responsibility for the outcome of her fortune readings, and warns would-be clients that whether or not they like the result, her results are always accurate.

GM note: Nynaeve is, in truth, a arcane mage. Her beloved works her own divination using sacred magic. Nynaeve's priestess wife, mobility impaired and immunocompromised by corporate malfeasance, almost never leaves her hidden room in the back of the shop, but is in constant communication with Nynaeve.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	25	12	12	12	15

Power 4

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Humanities

KEY ABILITIES

Home is where the Wards Are: Nynaeve's Curios and Concoctions is heavily warded against violence. Using the Anchored Ditties ability she has the Ditty of Aegis, the Aetherlight Ditty, and Absorbing Ditty supplied throughout the shop.

Mistress of Artifice: Nynaeve is experienced at Artificing and can create magical items as a downtime action. Follow the rules on pg 162 to determine what cost she will charge the Envoys.

Baru in the Backroom: Nynaeve's wife is a Baru with the Mantle of Knowledge allowing for use of the Divination and Seek Answer paradigm abilities on behalf of the Envoys.

Spells: In addition to riffing, most gutterwitches know a handful of spells from a college. Sustaining a spell requires a Backup Action each Round. A few common examples are listed below.

- **Absorbing Ditty (force):** Gain 3+3/bar Physical Armor. Sustainable.
- **Five Finger Force Flick (force):** 1 Force Bar. Roll 6d6+4 vs Aegis of target within 50m. On a Success, do 4d6 damage, and target is moved 20m in a direction of your choice. Each additional bar gives +3d6 damage.
- **Invisibility (light):** 2 Light Bars. +5 on Tests to be hidden. Sustainable.
- **Blinding Flash (light):** 1 Light Bars. While sustained, may make an Interrupt Action to roll 4d6+2 vs Aegis of a target. On a Success, the target gains 2 instances of Dulled on their next Test this Round.
- **Heat Shield (fire):** 1 Fire Bar. Reduce Cold and Fire damage by 3; enemies that attack you at range **T** take 3d6 fire damage.
- **Flame Burst (fire):** 1 Fire Bar. Roll 4d6+2 vs Aegis of a target with 50m; on a Success do 6d6 Fire damage.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Each Gutterwitch has a different combination of skills and known spells. See Arcane Paradigms for more spells to know. Additionally, many Gutterwitches have other skills as well, so adjust as needed.

Hammurabi

On the nighttime streets of the Shroud, where the divisions between social classes are stark, the enigmatic figure known as Hammurabi has emerged as controversial vigilante. Aodhan Tierney, once a wage slave burdened by the weight of societal expectations, found solace in the flames of his own resilience. Fueled by a fervent desire for order tempered with justice, Aodhan discovered his casting ability to wield arcane fire. The once-broken wage slave donned a mask resembling that ancient, first law-giver, and became an enigmatic, if violent, protector.

Wielding both literal and metaphorical flames, Aodhan has proven to be a guardian of the poor, fighting for them as he can against gangs, corrupt corporations, and law enforcement. Aodhan's alter ego became synonymous with fairness and moral law enforcement, earning him the moniker "Hammurabi" among the denizens of Neo Babylon. His actions, although largely criminal, resonated with those in the shroud who sought justice in a district rife with inequality. Hammurabi's mysterious pursuits, sought after by both law and disorder, make him a symbol of hope for those who have suffered under the thumb of oppression.

In the midst of societal strife, Aodhan is wanted by different factions for his supposed crimes, but remains undeterred, actively seeking allies among envoys who share his strong sense of justice.

Aodhan's core beliefs reflects a desire for a balanced and just society, where order is not imposed at the expense of fairness.He believes in assisting others, but only if they demonstrate a willingness to contribute to their own well-being. Aodhan values independence and avoids owing debts or being indebted to others, but is always willing to help envoys and grow his network of allies.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
35	20	18	15	17	15

Power 5. Armor 2. Adamant 2

KEY SKILLS

Influence, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, Magic Arts

KEY ABILITIES

The Mask is a Symbol: Hammurabi can inspire people to help restore their Animity. Make a TN 12 Arts (4d6+2) roll, restoring 5 Animity damage on a Success. A character can only benefit from Inspire once per Session.

Fan the Flames: Hammurabi can make a TN 12 Influence roll(5d6+3), on a Success, each ally gains +1 die to their next action. Multiple uses do not stack. Using this outside of a cinematic costs 1 Grit. He can also spend 3 Grit to make any roll against a target's Vigilance into a roll against all targets within 50m. Use the highest Vigilance among the crowd to determine success.

A Code of Steel and Brand: Hammurabi has a magesteel sword and is an accomplished fire mage. He can make melee attacks (6d6+3) dealing 4d6+3 damage with AP 4. If he harmonizes for a round he can instead launch a fire attack with Magic Arts (6d6+3) v the Aegis of the targets. If against one target it is 6d6 damage if it is against multiple targets it is 3d6 to each.

SPIRITS OF BEING

The most common type of spirits are spirits of being, referred to by the Baru as Rabish. Spirits of being are born when Sublime magic—the magic of identity—coalesces into a living being. Spirits of Being are tied to a specific thing, group, or place, and reflect the identity of the entity that formed them. Most Spirits of Being reflect natural phenomenon such as rivers, forests, trees, or animals.

The baru say Rabish are the souls of things that don't speak or build. Rivers, caves, forests, trees, plants, animals, clouds, storms, skies, may all have spirits associated with them. They may appear as very large versions of the thing they are the spirit of (huge tree the middle of a forest, huge elephant, etc) or they may be spectral or "light" versions of them as well. They may also appear as humanoids with features of their habitat, like a humanoid made of flowers, or garbage, or perhaps as the shades of those who have lived before.

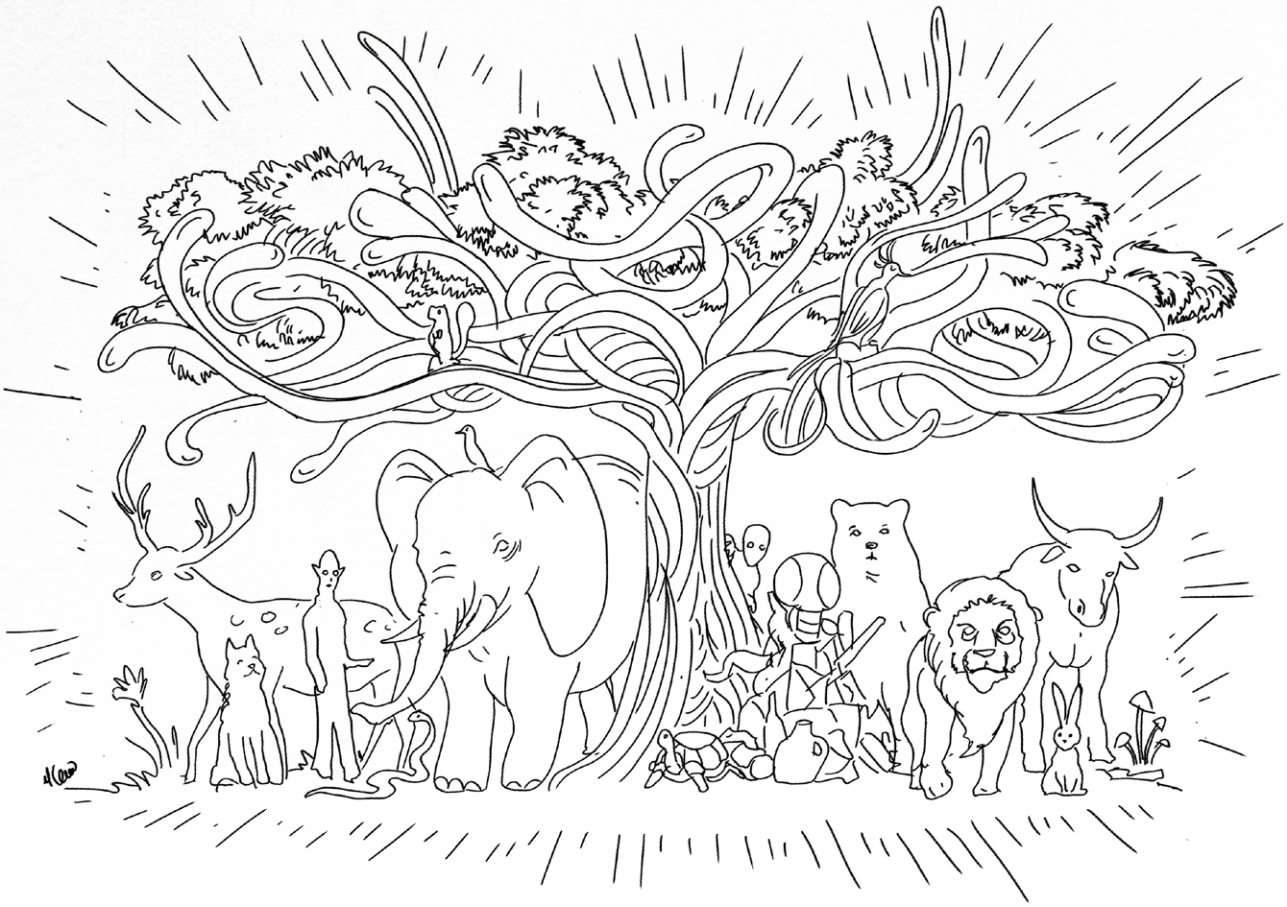
GENERIC SPIRIT OF BEING ABILITIES

Ethereal: In their base state, spirits of being are beings of pure mana. They are undetectable by mundane senses, and unable to affect or be affected by nonmagical phenomenon (unless stated otherwise). An Ethereal being can be noticed with shine perception, a Magic Arts + Awareness Test against the spirit's Aegis. Ethereal beings always have Magic Arts as a key skill. Ethereal beings who have not manifested cannot have their guard targeted, nor can their Health be reduced.

Empowerment: Spirits of being gain power from certain things, be they ideas, materials, or types of magic. These can boost their power, often enabling them to manifest. Most spirits are motivated to pursue things that empower them.

A magic user with aligned abilities may make a Magic Test as a Main Action with a TN equal to 8+ the spirit's Power to increase the Power of the spirit by 1 for 1 Round. An aligned magic user may also use the Increase Relation Power Downtime Action to boost their Power permanently (see pg 36).

Manifestation: When a spirit reaches Power 3 or more, it gains the ability to manifest by spending a Backup Action. Each Round the spirit spends manifesting is taxing, costing the spirit 6 Animity damage (apply Adamant as normal). Each point of Power above 3 reduces the damage by 1. When a spirit reaches Power 6, it may manifest as a Free Action at no cost.



Spirits of Nature

River Spirit

As water falls from the skies and drains into streams, and those streams into rivers, the mana of the water begins to coalesce. As the river continues, this mana eventually takes on a life of its own, becoming a river spirit. A river spirit exists where the water of the river is, both in the stream itself but also the plants and ecosystem surrounding it.

River spirits tend to be protective and nurturing for the creatures, plants, and people around their river. They seek to protect both nature and communities around the river and ensure there is enough food and water for everyone to flourish. They can become dangerous when they view someone or something acting to destroy the ecosystem, and some rivers become hostile to people, assuming they are there to destroy, pollute, or worse.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	25	8	14	13	15

Power 4. Armor 5. Adamant 4

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Physicality (when manifested), Influence, Arts

KEY ABILITIES

Empowerment: River Spirits gain Power as the size of the river and the life around their river grows, and lose Power when the river becomes poisoned or restricted from a drought or dam. River spirits may also become empowered from magic related to growing or water—a Water Yojin or Chosen with the Mantle of Cultivation or Nature may use their abilities to shape the world around the spirit to boost their Power (see Empowerment, above).

Ethereal: As Spirits of Being, River Spirits are normally Ethereal (see pg 266).

Manifestation: Powerful (or empowered) spirits can take physical form (see pg 266).

River's Blessing: As a Downtime Action, those that rest near the spirit's river can gain the benefit of the spirit's blessing. Those resting lose one Consequence, and the river spirit makes a TN 8 Magic Arts Test. On a Success, those resting under the spirit's blessing heal 1 Health and Animity damage and gain 1 Grit.

Pull Under: As a Main Action, a river spirit may summon water to pull down a target near water. The spirit chooses a target within 100m that is within 10m of a body of fresh water. Make an opposed Magic Arts vs Piloting (for vehicles) or Physicality (for beings). The River spirit takes a penalty on its roll equal to the size of the creature or vehicle if applicable. On a Success, the river spirit pulls the target under the water—the target takes 4 Physical damage and is moved 20m down the river.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Spirits come in a wide range of powers—for each point of Power adjust Adamant and Armor as per the empowerment ability (as well as the normal adjustment to skills, Health, Animity, and defense).

Many other natural spirits of places and environments exist—while they maintain a similar relationship to empowerment and manifestation, the details of what empowers them and what other abilities differ based on their identity.

Elementals

Air Elementals

Like all elementals, Air elementals are instinctual beings, typically content to follow the winds and soar as mana through the sky. When empowered by a mage or Air Yojin, they can affect the winds and cause lightning or gales to occur in the world, following the mana the magic user channels into the world. Careful magic users can use this to control elementals and cause them to do their bidding.

In their natural state, air elementals desire nothing more than to move with the wind. Naturally empowered elementals ride with the wind, strengthening it and starting and intensifying storms. Elementals empowered by magic users follow the magic empowering them, and act on behalf of their controlling caster.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
15	15	17	14	16	13

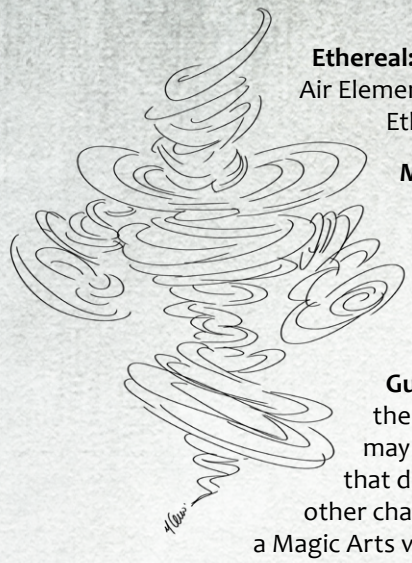
Power 4. Armor 5.

KEY SKILLS

Physicality (when empowered)

KEY ABILITIES

Empowerment: Air elementals gain Power in stormy areas and in broad open spaces. Air elementals may also become empowered from magic related to air or movement—an Air Yojin or Mage with access to the College of Electricity may use their abilities to shape the world around the spirit to boost their Power (see Empowerment, above).



Ethereal: As spirits of being, Air Elementals are normally Ethereal (see pg 266).

Manifestation: Powerful (or empowered) spirits can take physical form (see pg 266).

Gust: When manifested, the Air elemental may make blasts of air that disorient and knock other characters aside. Make a Magic Arts vs Guard roll on a target within 50m. On a Success, they take 1d6 Physical damage and gain Dulled -1 on their next turn.

Lightning: When manifested, the Air elemental may make lightning strikes against nearby targets. Make a Magic Arts vs Aegis roll on a target within 50m. On a Success, they take 2d6 Electrical damage, ignoring Armor.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Other elementals exist for all of the elements emulated by the Yojin (Fire, Water, Air, Earth, and Void), and each can be empowered by an associated arcane school (Fire, Force, Electricity, Alchemical, and Mana, respectively).

TEMPESTS

Calling Tempests "Beings" of Arcane Mana may be a stretch, as it's unclear whether they are any more sentient than a storm or flood. Whether there is some primal intelligence in them, or they merely progress through some intrinsic laws of magic, Tempests are unpredictable bouts of energy. Minor tempests manifest as flashes of light, unexplicably moving objects, spoiled food or spots of abnormal temperature, often affecting a single building or even room. The largest tempests are known as Mana Storms—areas or abnormal energy that can stretch for kilometers, and in the worst cases level cities, be they scorching pillars of fire, a swirling vortex of force, or a terrifying miasma that dissolves everything in it to dust. While most tempests are only modestly dangerous, the threat of Tempests leads most settlements to contract out Storm Wardens—mages specializing in controlling tempests and stopping Mana Storms from becoming out of control.

CONTROLLING TEMPESTS

Tempests can be controlled by a Mage channeling arcane energy to quell the tempest. The mage starts by harmonizing mana bars or bars of a school associated with the tempest (i.e. Force for a Force Tempest, Fire for a Fire Tempest, etc.). Once the mage has harmonized the bars they seek to use to quell the tempest, set a Progress Track equal to three times the Power of the Mana Storm. Make a Magic Arts Roll against a TN equal to 10+ the mana storm's Power, gaining a +1 for each Bar harmonized as per normal. On a Success, make progress on the track equal to 5 + the number of bars harmonized. When the Progress Track is completed, the Power of the Tempest is permanently reduced by one. A Mage may choose to immediately start a new Progress Track to continue reducing the Power of the Mana Storm.

A mage can only affect a tempest within 1000m, though Storm Wardens train to affect wider areas, allowing them to protect broader regions (see pg 164).

MUNDANE COUNTERMEASURES

While most individuals without arcane magic simply hunker down to avoid the wrath of a Tempest, some engineers have developed ways to trap the energy of a Tempest and dissipate its wrath using technology (for example, using lightning rods to dissipate an Electric Tempest). Setting up such a trap requires a Test against TN 14+the Power of the tempest. Gain a +5 on this Test if preparations have been made beforehand, requiring a Downtime Action and the purchase of specific gear (for each fortune spent, increase the maximum size of the tempest affected by the countermeasures by 2, base 1). On a Success, the Tempest decreases its Power by half for as long as it is affecting the area with the countermeasures in place.

FORCE TEMPEST

Known also as an Invisible Storm, a force tempest is visible only by the movement of debris and objects in its wake. Fortunately, the storm doesn't come completely without warning—a deafening roar of white noise accompanies the tempest.

TEMPEST TRAITS

In cinematics, resolve all Tempest effects at the end of each Round. When making a Test, treat the Tempest as having Magic Arts as a key skill.

Cacophony: Upon entering a tempest, the Tempest rolls Magic Arts against each character's Aegis. On a Failure, they gain two instances of Dulled for the remainder of the scene and takes 2d6 Physical damage, ignoring Armor. Substantial

ear protection (costing at least 1 fortune and otherwise deafening the character) provide a +5 bonus to Aegis.

Maelstrom: The mixture of unseen forces and hurled debris cause damage. Each Round, the Tempest makes a Magic Arts Test against guard for all targets in its area; on a Success it does 1d6+Power damage.

Levitating Field: Unpredictable forces in the Tempest cause areas to become weightless before suddenly crashing against the ground. Each turn the Tempest makes a Magic Arts Test against the Aegis of all targets in the effect. On a Success, roll a d6—on a 1-3 the target is crushed against the ground, taking 1d6 Physical damage and having their movement halved; on a 4-6 they are floated above the ground, immobilizing them unless they can push off against other objects or have means of flight.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Tempests exist corresponding to each school of magic (though Mana tempests are rare and poorly understood). Tempests vary widely in their size and Power, though tempests greater than Power 5 (especially large ones) are thankfully quite rare.

SACRED SPIRITS

Sacred magic is the magic of ideas—Sacred spirits are best thought of as ideas incarnate. The simplest spirits, Demons, are a simple incarnation of a single idea, using their powers to force that idea to become manifest in the world, while more powerful beings balance multiple natures, gaining agency in the play between their core ideas.

Unlike Spirits of Being, Sacred spirits are not tied to any specific entity in this world, instead crossing over from beyond to shape the world in their image. For most Sacred Spirits their influence is subtle, working through guidance and inspiration, though a rare few appear in fantastical forms based on the prevailing religious beliefs in the area in which they appear.

THE HEAVENS

The realm of sacred spirits goes my many names—the Baru refer to it as An, but it is alternatively referred to as the Heavens, the Realm of the Powers, or the cognate realm, depending on the speaker and context. Whatever its name, the Heavens are an alien place, devoid of physical dimensions or matter. While fully understanding such a place is difficult for the minds of most mortals (and not aided by the tendency of sacred spirits to speak in metaphors), most scholars describe it like a solar system, with the biggest ideas manifesting as domains orbiting around each other like planets (these domains are thought to correspond to sacred mantles, though many more exist than are commonly channeled by the Baru). Orbiting closely to each domain are closely related ideas, while complex ideas are caught between the pull of different domains—and sitting at the point of balance between the domains rest the Powers.

THE POWERS

The powers are often named as Gods, though even the Baru debate the degree to which their descriptions as gods capture their true nature or is simply a useful metaphor for allowing us to understand such beings. The powers rarely, if ever, directly intervene in the workings of the world, though Baru and other Chosen can channel their power to influence the world in ways related to the domain of each powers.

Given their power and distance from the material world, Powers have no attributes or stats.

FALLEN POWERS

The Powers are ever changing, often seeming to shift to favor one aspect or another, occasionally seeming to shift domains over time. The most marked change, however, lies in whispered myths and forbidden lore—the Fallen Powers. Legend states the Fallen Powers have moved from balance between the domains, instead falling deep into influence of a single domain. Those who reach out for the blessing of a fallen power find an unrelenting will to exert their reality on the world. Rumors say that one such fallen power is Enki, forswearing his domains of Cultivation and Domain to impose a dark and primal Nature upon the world—though theories suggest that other fallen powers may exist.

HERALDS

It's said in the Heavens, the Heralds flit between Domains, never fully of one idea or another. In the play between ideas, Heralds gain a choice—and hence free will.

The nature and motivation of a given Herald is difficult to pin down. When on our world, Heralds have no single true form: a Herald may appear as a being from ancient mythology one minute and a nondescript factory worker the next. Speaking with them is an often painstaking excercise in sifting fact from fictions, as they adopt the mannerisms, beliefs, and expectations of the form they take—claiming at turns to be demigods, ghosts, or a simple traveler passing through. Those who've dealt extensively with heralds (including many chosen and Baru) don't consider this

a sign of intentional deceit, but rather a side effect of their attempts to translate their essence into our world.

The motivations of Heralds are similarly hard to parse. Heralds seem drawn to instantiations of their central ideals in the world, though they rarely directly intervene with the course of events—leading some to suggest they are primarily watchers (perhaps some sort of metaphysical tourist). Others, pointing to their conversations, coincidences, or other subtle shifts in the course of events as signs they are playing a subtle game—perhaps on behalf of the Powers, perhaps in their own agency. Some Chosen claim they met a Herald before they manifested their powers, and that Heralds are looking for those willing to channel their related mantles, and that is their primary goal in visiting. Rarer tales speak of Heralds making deals or pacts with those who seek them out, though the nature (or wisdom) of such deals is a matter of dispute.

The tendency of Heralds towards non-intervention is not a sign of weakness or limits—they have no compunctions against defending themselves, and rarely they've been known to appear in force (with rumors suggesting that their targets involve mages tinkering with forbidden mana magic in ways that earn their ire).

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
35	40	14	15	14	17

Power 5.

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Humanities, as per assumed form

KEY ABILITIES

Ethereal: By default, Heralds are beings of pure mana, only perceptible by those able to see mana via Shinesight. Ethereal beings who have not manifested cannot be affected by any physical effect, though some magical abilities can affect them. A Herald may switch from Ethereal to Manifested (and vice versa) as a Main Action.

Visitors: Heralds are not from this world, and cannot be truly destroyed here. When a Herald is reduced to zero Health or Animity, they immediately disappear from this world. While banishment is not permanent, it is extremely rare for a banished Herald to reappear in less than a month. A herald may choose to depart this world at any time as a Main Action, though they are similarly restricted in how quickly they can return.

Shifting Form: Heralds can take almost any form, seemingly bound by rules of theme and symbolism rather than any physical constraints. They may use any skills and abilities appropriate to their form, though their skills are capped at the Power of the herald. Noticing something off about the Herald requires passing a Shine Perception Test against the Herald's vigilance.

Sacred Mantles: Every Herald is aligned with two mantles, and can cast spells from those mantles (though many favor one domain and mantle over the other).

Core Ideal: Every herald has a core ideal, reflecting their position between the domains. This could be something as broad as Law (Justice and Authority) or specific as "The Coziness of a warm home in a rainstorm" (Cultivation and Passion). A Herald will never intentionally refute or destroy an instantiation of that ideal—if they are in a situation where they are forced to do so, they are immediately banished.

Sense Ideal: Heralds instinctively know the nearest location of where their ideals are relevant or instantiated, as well as all other instances within 10km (for example, a Herald of Law would know the location of a court or a criminal on the lam, while a Herald of Coziness would know the nearest comfy house).

Instantiate Ideal: Heralds possess the ability to influence the world related to their domain. As a Main Action, a Herald may provide +2d6 dice or one instance of Dulled on any Test within 100m related to their Core Ideal.

Channel Sacred Power Heralds also have the ability to directly channel Sacred Power, though they use it rarely. As a Main Action, they may make a Magic Arts check to make 5 progress on a Progress Track (targeting the usual TN). If used in combat, this instead does 2d6 Health and Animity damage (targeting Aegis).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Many Heralds have unique powers—abilities from Divine Paradigms are a good place to look for abilities and get inspiration. Stranger heralds reflect uncommon or minor domains, and may manifest abilities unfamiliar to most Chosen.

DEMONS

By some tellings, Demons are Heralds who've lost one of their ties to a domain, while in others, they are merely what passes for life deep in the center of each domain. Either way, Demons are the simplest of sacred spirits—not to be confused with the least dangerous. Each demon instantiates an idea or concept and seeks to manifest it in the world to the exclusion of all else—a demon of Apathy drives it's victims to a state of indifference, while a Demon of Loss seeks to cause those it encounters to lose what is important to them. Most demons struggle to directly affect the physical world, instead acting to influence and dominate people to their ends. Those influenced by demons describe thoughts, indistinguishable from their own, popping into their heads to convince them of a course of action. While this leads to their reputation

as master manipulators and tempters, they are not sapient, lacking any thoughts, feelings, or desires of their own—many Baru hypothesize that the words and tempations offered by a demon are instead created by the victim themselves in response to the Demon's magic—who better to convince someone than themselves? More powerful demons can fully possess a target, bringing their victim along on their unrelenting pursuit of instantiating their idea in the world—a pursuit the demon makes without choice or malice, simply being its nature. Even the most powerful demons, who become incarnate after consuming their victim—while capable of elaborate plots and goals, are believed to have no inner will—their complexity merely enabling them to take the longer view as to how to fulfill their nature.

The vast majority of demons represent negative concepts, leading some to suggest they are tools of greater malicious powers towards their end. Others suggest that the single-minded focus of a demon distorts even more positive ideas towards destruction until they are only recognizable as a perverted mockery of their essence. This idea is supported by the danger of the rare demons representing positive concepts—a demon of Charity may drive its victims to give away everything they own until they awake from its influence, impoverished and confused, while a demon of Safety may cause its victims to become shut-ins, avoiding all danger.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
5 x P*	–	10 + P*	11+P *	9 + P *	9 +P *

* Demons attributes vary with their Power

Frightening 2 x Power.

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Humanities, as per assumed form

KEY ABILITIES

Ethereal: In their base state, demons are spirits of pure mana only perceptible by those able to see mana via Shinesight. Ethereal beings who have not manifested cannot have their guard targeted, nor can their Health be reduced.

Non-sentient: While demons can enact plans and convincingly impersonate a being with free will, they operate solely based on the principle of furthering their core ideal in the world, and are not subject to suffering, trauma, pleasure, or any other emotional experience or state. Demons lack an Animity attribute, and are immune to all Animity damage.

Empowerment: Demon's strength depends on their ability to feed, and their Power often grows or falls rapidly as they are dealt with. Whenever a Demon's Power is increased it gains +5 Health and +1 to Initiative and all Defenses. Similarly, whenever it lose Power its Health is decreased by 5 and Initiative and all defenses are decreased by one.

Demons gain Power by instantiating their core idea in the world. The size of the instantiation depends on their Power—a Power 1 Demon of Loss may be able to grow based on the temporary sorrow of losing a favored knick-knack, while a Power 6 Demon of Loss may require the dispossession and trauma of an entire community. Demons can also be empowered by the concerted effort of sacred casters with a domain that aligns to their ideal using the rules to increase Relation Power (see pg 36)—this is invariably an evil (and bad) idea, though some cults are devoted enough to ill-advised malevolence to do it, and some demons manage to ensnare chosen in their plans through deceit, manipulation, or force.

Defiance: Demons are vulnerable to acts anathema to their ideal done in their presence. To injure a demon, the act must be done in their proximity or relate to acts that previously empowered them, and must be of a similar scale as an act required to empower them (such that a Power 1 Demon of Loss can be warded away by a kind gift of a recovered object, while a Power 6 Demon of Loss may require substantial reparations to a dispossessed community). Such acts decrease the demon's Power by 1 (or in extreme cases, more).

Demonic Influence: Demons primarily influence the world via controlling others. This comes in three stages:

- **Influence:** The demon subtly influences a target. In order to affect a target at this point, the target must have some internal instantiation of the idea of the demon (e.g. a Demon of Loss can only target someone experiencing loss, a Demon of Apathy can only target someone with some amount of apathy). The Demon makes a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test. On a Success, the targeted character will take actions to advance the core ideal of the Demon. The influenced character compartmentalizes the actions they take under the influence, and do not remark on their oddness, nor do they take Animity damage if the actions conflict with their Values

or goals. If confronted by another character, the Demon must make another Magic Arts vs Influence Test—if it fails, the influence ends and the character is immediately made aware of all actions that they have taken (and takes Animity loss as appropriate for their actions).

- **Possession:** A powerful demon (Power 4 or above) can instead fully take control of their target. A demon takes possession by making a Magic Arts Test agains the Aegis of its target. A demon may normally only possess a target it has already influenced and caused to take an act towards its nature—it may attempt to possess another target but requires a Dynamic Success to do so. If a demon fails to possess a target, that target is immune for 24 hours. When a demon possesses an NPC, the demon acts through them. The Demon is considered manifested and the NPC is treated as being a Power equal to that of the GM (if not already higher). The NPC also gains any key skills the demon has. The NPC has no agency or ability to act or speak while possessed. The demon is in full control. It may mimic the NPC in order to fool friends and family, but it is not the NPC acting or speaking. While possessing a target, the demon takes half the damage the target takes. As long as the demon remains above zero Health, the target can take actions normally, even if their damage would otherwise render them unconscious or dead. The demon does not, however, benefit from any healing to the target. Those without magic assistance often exploit this to expel a demon—subjecting a possessed target to hardship over time while tending to their wounds, hoping the possessed victim can outlast the demon.
- **Apotheosis:** Truly powerful demons (Power 6 or greater) can fully subsume a being they possess. To do so, they must have possessed their victim for a number of days equal to their Power, and each day make a substantial instantiation of their ideal in the world (this often makes them visible, giving envoys and others who hunt demons a chance to stop them). After that point, the demon starts a Progress Track equal to the maximum Animity of their target. Each day, they may make a Magic Arts vs Aegis Test against their target; on a Success they gain 5 progress. Upon completion, the demon fully merges their form with the possessed target, killing them for all intents and purposes. The form the demon takes after this depends on the demon and their perceived best strategy for instantiating their ideals—some demons maintain the form of their victim, attempting to continue through the world undetected, while others take horrible and monstrous forms, often possessed of powerful supernatural abilities. A few possibilities are added below for inspiration—each demon powerful enough to undergo apotheosis is unique and has it's own ability.

Demons and Real Life Trauma

Hopefully, as part of Session Zero, you talked about topics that players don't want to explore (see pg 73). Demons, even more so than other elements of Neo Babylon's hopeful dystopia, can often run against real world traumas that people don't want to explore when they actually want escapism. Double check any boundaries your group has before you include demons in your story.

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Individual demon's abilities to influence the world often have specific effects. Below are a few examples, with suggestions on how they act at various stages of influence:

- **Sidanu (Demon of Disorientation):** This is a demon who causes nausea, vertigo, dizziness, and giddiness. It appears in its ethereal form as pale green, and its body swirls with various nauseating colors like liquid gasoline. They usually have moon-shaped heads, which can be crescent, full, or in some rare cases, appear as eclipsed. They tend to be found around water supplies or other places where drinks are stored.
  - **Influence:** The Sidanu encourages its targets to partake to excess in intoxicating beverages—often appearing as if its targets are merely addicts *"Just another drink..."*
  - **Possession:** The Sidanu drives its victims to push others to excess, enabling addicts, driving others to addiction, and in some cases engaging in mass poisonings to trigger its effect among the whole community.
  - **Apotheosis:** The figure appears as an upscale bartender, though their clothes look perhaps a century out of date. With some attention (TN 13), you realize what seems off about them—even entirely sober they always appear a little bit doubled. They slide across the bar the best drink you've ever had—and make a magic Test vs aegis to give you a consequence for the remainder of the scene.
- **Algea (Demon of Loss):** Appearing in the ethereal as shrouded figures draped in mourning clothes, Algea are demons of loss. They are drawn to funeral homes, cemeteries, and places of great tragedy.

- **Influence:** The Algea drives its targets to casual acts of careless vandalism or violence targeted at things of value—both valuable to others, but also to the influenced target.
- **Possession:** The Algea possesses its target to inflict loss on others—finding things that are valuable to others and destroying them.
- **Apotheosis:** The figure appears as a destitute young women, shrouded in dirty worn clothes, her face scarred with tears, clutching what appears to be a child—on closer look (TN 13) you notice the child is lifeless. As you approach within 10m of the figure, a still wind seems to cover you (and if it succeeds on a Magic Arts vs Aegis), your most valuable tool starts to corrode, reducing it to half Health. The figure reaches out towards you, seemingly for hope, but at the last minute, her grasp moves towards your most valuable item (on successful Melee Combat vs Guard), and the tool is destroyed.

MAGICAL CREATURES

The archives of Neo Babylon document many magical creatures. Magical creatures typically derive their abilities from Sublime magic—drawing ability from their innate nature.

GRYPHONS

Long a symbol of freedom and rebellion, Gryphons are roaming creatures, patrolling hilly areas, swooping down upon their prey. Legend says that Gryphons were created by the heavenly eagle Anzu, the essence of the harsh wind, and prefer to as much time as possible in the air—Regardless of the truth of this, they've long represented the wild and untamed world.

Gryphons, more than any other species, have resisted domestication since ancient times, although gryphon riders are not completely unattested in ancient history. If one hears of a domesticated gryphon, or more likely hears about the sport gryphball, they are almost certainly confused with the similar creature, the opinicus, which have been domesticated for ages. Gryphons have been known to be devoted companions—but this is only at the pleasure of the creature, and always on its terms. Those gryphons raised in, or forced into, captivity, rarely survive.

It is rare to see gryphons in and around Neo Babylon, but there are rumors a few prowl the streets in the dark. More commonly, they can be found in and around the Spine of Tiamat mountain range, and roosting on Mount Dunbāvand in particular. While gryphons may not be able to be tamed, they stir up inspiration in certain segments of society, and ever since Anzu stole the Tablet of Destinies from Enlil, gryphons have offered hope to those who desire to see the mighty fall and the rebel, outcast, and lowly lifted up.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	20	16	15	14	14

Power 4. Armor 2. Frightening 3.

KEY SKILLS

Melee Combat, Observation, Physicality

KEY ABILITIES

Claws and Bite: 4d6+2 vs Guard; 3d6 Physical damage AP 2.

Flight: Gryphons can fly with a max Speed 5.

Powerful Charge: If a Gryphon attacks after moving at least 50m on a turn, it gains Augment 5 on the attack.

Cry of Freedom: As sublime beings whose essence is synonymous with freedom, Gryphons are magically resistant to being restrained or controlled. All attempts to restrain their movement, force them to do something against their will, or otherwise tame a gryphon gain 2 instances of dulled. As a main action a gryphon may let out a cry of freedom. If it does so, all creatures who can hear it (typically within 1000m) gain this ability for the next round, and on their next turn may make a roll to escape any such affects (even if they would normally be stopped from attempting to try again).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Stronger and weaker gryphons exist. Young gryphons are incapable of flying, relying on their parents to protect them.

MIRROR SPIDER

A giant ambush predator found in deep forests and rocky canyons, even a single mirror spider can be a terrifying encounter, but sometimes clusters are found nesting in close proximity. Their adaptive-reflective camouflage allows them to blend in with the surrounding terrain as long as they stay motionless, and their eight limbs are sword-sharp. Their typical strategy is to leap from a vantage point onto their prey, and they can even take down gryphons this way.

When a female mirror spider's eggs hatch, the spiderlings gather on the mother's abdomen, blending in with their own near-perfect adaptive abilities. People who manage to kill a female mirror spider will often be horrified by the tiny blurry shapes that scatter from the corpse and disappear into the trees.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
28	20	21	12	15	13

Power 5. Armor 4. Frightening 5.

KEY SKILLS

Melee Combat, Observation, Physicality

KEY ABILITIES

Slashing Limbs: 5d6+3 vs Guard; 2d6+7 Physical damage AP 2.

Adaptive Carapace: As long as a mirror spider is motionless, it gains Reliable 5 on any physicality tests to remain undetected.

VISITORS

Unlike most magical creatures, who are of this world and derive their powers from sublime magic, or Sacred Spirits who come from the Realm of the Powers, some beings on this world defy this simple understanding, and are believed to have traveled to this world through unknown means. The two best understood are the Fae and Dragons, though others are thought to exist.

FAE

Many people, particularly in Val Broceliande, claim fae heritage—despite this, the origins of the Fae are shrouded in mystery. In ancient times, stories of Fae abound, but only their decendents remain, at least as far as most know. Some claim, however, that the Fae never truly dissapeared, instead moving to the shadows, operating behind the scenes towards some unknown purpose.

CHANGELING

Stories of changelings, fae creatures able to replace people and adopt their appearance and manerisms, stretch back to ancient history. Despite this, solid evidence of the existence of changelings is sparse (let alone their prevalence if they do exist). For the conspiratorial, changelings exist at every level of society, controlling the levers of power and manipulating the world to their own devices. For the more conservative (at least the ones that believe changelings exist at all), changelings are rare remnants of the ancient fey, surviving by blending in, avoiding notice by living normal and nondescript lives.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
25	30	16	15	14	15

Power 5.

KEY SKILLS

Deception, Humanities, Magic Arts, See Mimic Ability

KEY ABILITIES

Mimic: Changelings can take the form of any person or nonmagical creature. To do so, the changeling must observe their target for 10 uninterrupted minutes, during which time their target cannot notice them. After this point, the changeling may assume their appearance (as of the time they were observed), and when doing so gaining a partial grasp of their skills and memory (see Change Form, below).

Change Form: The changeling may, as a Main Action, assume the form of any creature that it has used the Mimic ability on. A changeling may remember a number of such forms equal to its Power. The changeling may use all abilities of the form it assumes, with the following exceptions:

- The changeling has all skills that the form had (aside ones it has naturally) at a Power one lower than the Power of the changeling (default 4).
- A changeling may never use any magical abilities of the form it takes (though some changelings have arcane abilities of their own, see Adjustments), nor may it gain access to any abilities from the Magic Hunter paradigm.
- A changeling may not benefit from any cyberware, instead replacing them with nonfunctional facsimile. Rumors persist that some changelings have learned to incorporate cyberware if they steal it from the original owner.

The replica is otherwise perfect, being indistinguishable via observation. Attempts to distinguish the changeling based on their mannerisms are difficult—the changeling gains Reliable 4 on any Deception tests to appear as their form. Detecting a changeling becomes even more difficult in person—a changeling automatically succeeds on any Deception Test to appear as their form if their Deception roll beats the Aegis of the person they are targeting, as any inconsistencies are subconsciously ignored (their opponent may still succeed on a Dynamic or Critical Success).

A changeling may not change shapes with this ability when being observed, even by mechanical means such as a camera (any device that would leave a record of the transformation).

Avoidance of True Form: A changeling that is in the presence of the source of the form that its in takes 1d6 Animity damage each Round, increasing to 2d6 Animity damage if the source is actively observing them. If a changeling is reduced to 0 Animity by this ability, they are killed.

Unstable Death: A dead changeling's body decomposes at an accelerated rate, unperturbed by any efforts to preserve the body. Once killed, a changeling's body is reduced to dust within one week.

Fae-touched: The character knows that any fae-touched creature it is aware of within 10m is fae-touched, and detects as fae-touched to any other fae-touched creature. The character always knows the ambient level of mana and when they are in Seelie and Unseelie Zones (see "Seelie and Unseelie Zones" on pg 276).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Stronger and weaker changelings exists, ranging from almost mythical infiltrators and assassins to changelings living ordinary and unremarkable lives as an assumed identity. Many changelings have developed additional skills in their own right, allowing them to use those skills even when assuming an identity without them. Some changelings have access to arcane magic.

FAE BEAST

Marginally less evasive than sapient fae, fae creatures are widely acknowledged to exist. The source of mythical hunts, fae beast are almost impossible to detect by all but a rare few.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
20	15	16	16	14	15

Power 4.

KEY SKILLS

Physicality, Melee Combat, Observation

KEY ABILITIES

Hidden Paths: Fae beasts are undetectable by any senses except Shinesight to most individuals (but see Fae Hunt, below). Those with the fae-touched ability can spot them, but only while they are within 10m.

Fearsome Beasts: Many fae beasts possess impressive natural weapons, whether it be a claw, bite, or antlers. When using them in Melee Combat, treat them as a melee weapon (4d6+2 vs Guard; 3d6+4 damage, AP 4).

Fae Hunt: Fae Beasts are generally only visible to a chosen few, either those they are hunting, or those hunting them. A fae beast stalking a target becomes visible to that target and any members of their immediate group (generally no more than 5-6 individuals). Those hunting in areas with fae beasts may occassionally see brief glimpses of fae beasts; if they do and immediately pursue, they may see the fae beast for as long as they take no actions besides pursing the fae beast.

Fae-touched: The character knows that any fae-touched creature it is aware of within 10m is fae-touched, and detects as fae-touched to any other fae-touched creature. The character always knows the ambient level of mana and when they are in Seelie and Unseelie Zones (see "Seelie and Unseelie Zones" on pg 276).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Fae beasts can take the form of almost any type of animals, and have abilities consistent with (or often surpassing) that animal (for example, a fae python may have a constricting ability, while a fae spider may have webs or poison).

Seelie and Unseelie Zones

The ancient stories of the Fey describe wild, magical realms—Seelie Realms where everything appears vibrant and brimming with energy, and Unseelie Realms, where everything appears muted and desolate. Some delvers have reported finding such realms. Mages from the College of Mana who have studied them describe them as areas of abnormally high and low concentrations of magic. This manifests as a bias towards the positive or negative aspects of magic—in a Seelie realm, creating energy is easy, while absorbing it is hard, and vice versa.

In a Seelie realm, activities that create positive effects (this includes all sacred spells) or increase the amount of energy (e.g spells that create heat, electricity, light, or create complicated chemicals) gain +1d6, while spells that absorb energy (e.g. spells that absorb damage, create cold or darkness, or reduce materials to inert dust gain one instance of Dulled).

Type of Magic	Effects of Seelie Realm	Effects of Unseelie Realm
Arcane	+1d6 on spells that create energy (producing heat, light, electricity, movement, synthesizing chemicals).	+1d6 on spells that absorb energy (absorbing damage, reducing materials to inert dust, creating cold or darkness).
	Dulled +1 on spells that absorb energy (absorbing damage, reducing materials to inert dust, creating cold or darkness).	Dulled +1 on spells that create energy (producing heat, light, electricity, movement, synthesizing chemicals).
Sacred	Gain +1d6 on all rolls; unattuned dissonance causes 5 Animity damage per point of dissonance.	Gain an instance of Dulled on all spells; unattuned dissonance causes 1 Animity damage.
Sublime	May take 1d6 Irresistible Health and Animity damage to start a new meditation as a Main Action (this may exceed the normal limit of number of meditations).	Meditating in an Unseelie Realm takes 1 hour. While under the effect of a meditation started in an Unseelie Realm, gain +1 Aegis.

DRAGONS

Dragons are drawn to the unknown areas—places unknown to other sapient beings. It's said that this draw is what brought them to our world originally, drawn to a new world long before the spread of people. As the peoples of the world expanded, dragons retreated to more and more remote locales, always staying in the uncharted lands.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, dragons have an affinity to the Mantle of Secrets, and many of their powers reflect this powerful bond. Dragon lairs are obfuscated from efforts to know them, and a dragon instinctively knows whenever someone has learned about their lair. Furthermore, dragons possess powerful forgetting magic—allowing them to wipe away the memories of those who discover them, leaving their lair and domain undiscovered.

While dragons seek to elude notice, they are curious, particularly of forgotten artifacts and treasures (both magical and nonmagical). Many an ancient shipwreck or legendary tool has found it's way to a dragon's lair—only to be recovered centuries or millenia later when the dragon is driven onward from the lair by intrepid explorers who penetrate its magic.

Health	Animity	Init	Vigilance	Guard	Aegis
40	35	14	18	16	17

Power 7. Armor 15 (30 Heat/Cold).

KEY SKILLS

Magic Arts, Melee Combat, Observation, Physicality

KEY ABILITIES

Breath of Oblivion: The dragon's breath is a powerful assault that shatters the senses of those who face the dragon. The dragon targets a location

within 30m—all targets within 20m of that point, or between the dragon and an affected point (this makes a cone) are affected by this ability. The dragon makes a Magic Arts vs Aegis attack against all affected targets; on a Success the targets take 5d6 Animity damage. If the character is humbled or unconscious after taking this damage, they lose all memories of the dragon or its lair. This ability requires contact with the gas, and is blocked by an intact hazmat suit or similar precautions, though a successful Dynamic Success on a melee attack from the dragon jeopardizes such protection. The dragon is immune to its own breath.

Claws and Bite: Dragons have fearsome physical strength. When attacking with their claws and bite, they roll 7d6+4 Melee Combat; on a Success they do 6d6 damage AP 5. On a Dynamic Success, the dragon affects the target with their venom, as if they were affected by the Breath of Oblivion ability.

Swift Wings: A dragon's wings, as well as its innate magic, allow it to travel at extraordinary speeds. A dragon may move at a Speed equal to its Power (default 7) flying through the air and space. Halve this Speed (rounding up) when running or swimming underwater, and divide it by 4 (rounding up) when burrowing through the earth.

Dragon Scales: Dragons are able to survive even the most inhospitable locales. Dragons are immune to all metabolic damage, and are immune to the effects of pressure or lack of atmosphere. Double the value of the dragon's Armor when determining their resistance to environmental threats (such as lighting storms or lava).

Dragon Lair: A dragon may establish a lair in any uncharted area—this is often a hidden cave, but occasionally deep in a forest, at the bottom of a body of water, or even buried among sand or snow.

A dragon's lair becomes magically difficult to find. Anyone navigating within 10 km of the lair find their Aegis targeted by the Magic Arts of the dragon (7d6+4). Those who fail to resist find themselves taking subconscious detours to bring them away from the lair, or find dead ends or closed paths where there are none. Those who resist, or those who beat the Magic Arts roll with a Piloting, Observation, or Humanities roll, notice that something is off, enabling them (or others they contact) to begin a search for the Lair.

A dragon's Lair always begins with a concealment track of 15. Concealment rolls are opposed by the Magic Arts of the dragon. A dragon is supernaturally aware of the status of any concealment tracks against its lair, including knowing when it is discovered. A lair loses all special abilities if it remains discovered for more than 1 day (e.g. the discoverers remain alive with their memories intact), typically leading the dragon to move on.

Deflect Attention: A dragon may spend Animity instead of losing concealment at a 1:1 ratio, or spend 5 Animity to avoid being spotted in situations where concealment doesn't apply. The dragon may not use this against Dynamic or Critical Successes.

Dragons find concerted notice painful. They take 1 Animity damage each Round they are being directly observed. On the rare occasion they seek to interact with others, dragons usually converse from dark corners or crannies. When a dragon's Animity reaches zero, it will attempt to flee or hide.

Secret Magic: A dragon has access to all abilities from the Mantle of Secrets (see "Mantle of Secrets" on pg 185).

ADJUSTMENTS AND VARIANTS

Dragons come in a wide range of abilities and power, and many have unique talents and interests.

LKA
Radio Social

PART 6
SAPPIR VILLAGE

Sappir Village

In this section we provide an example Community and characters. An adventure (The Death of Lawmaster Finn) is available for those who desire a premade adventure focused around Sappir Village and its Envoys.

Name	Primary Skills	Archetype/ Aspect	Power	Default Regard
Sappir Village (Community)	Arts	Service	4	5
Sappir Art Collective (Faction)	Arts	Teacher	3	4
Moira Media (Faction)	Arts	Employer	5	0
Sappir Works (Faction)	Science	Clout	4	0
Demar Apothecarium (Faction)	Magic Arts	Swag	4	0
Lawjacks (Faction)	Melee Combat	Clout	5	-6
Sylvester Ory	Arts	Care	4	10
Gierre Sudryl	Human-ities	Information (Sappir Village History)	4	10

DESCRIPTION

Sappir Village is a neighborhood of about 3000 people in *Le Sanctuaire* district of Neo Babylon. While not as avant-garde chic as the hottest places downtown, Sappir Village has a reputation as a creative hot spot, with a wide range of well regarded restaurants, popular art-galleries, and local craftsmen, as well as a range of corporations that exploit the rich artistic talent pool for their own design needs. Sappir Village is best known for its art festivals—elaborate events where locals and tourists alike attend themed events full of food, performance, and, well, art!

CASTE

Lower Middle. Sappir Village ranges between the starving artists of the Sappir Art Collective to the well paid advertising leads of Moira Media, but by and large most people are workaday craftsmen and artists targeting the luxury consumption of the upper classes or trying to make a niche to compete with the mass produced goods produced at factories or printed at C-links.

POWER

Sappir Village has an Power of 4. Sappir Village has a tradition of working together to put on elaborate events, but its intrinsic resources and pressures limit some of what it can do.

FACTIONS

SAPPIR ART COLLECTIVE

North side of Sappir Village

The Sappir Art Collective is made up of about 30 individuals inhabiting an old abandoned mage-stone warehouse in the north part of Sappir Village. Originating from the village's conviction that everyone would have a place to stay, it quickly became the home for artists and other creatives willing to live in substandard conditions for a chance to make their art. Over the years, this work has paid dividends, as each generation of artists has renovated the building, turning it into a rather pleasant place to live.

SAPPIR WORKS

Center of Sappir Village (Offices)

Sappir Works covers the public infrastructure needs of Sappir Village, ranging from the technical to the plumbing. Sappir Works is covered by a levy on all members of the community, with a variable amount of waivers for those who can't pay. The workings of Sappir Works are a constant source of conflict in the town: either Sappir Works is underfunded because the levy is too affordable and there are too many waivers, it's regressive as it cuts down waivers, or it's subject to undue influence from corporations and wealthy patrons as they make special arrangements to pad its coffers. Sappir Works is currently in the latter state, as Moira Media and Demar Apothecarium provide a substantial portion of its funding in exchange for limited control over its decisions and investments.

MOIRA MEDIA

East side of Sappir Village

Where there's creativity to be found, there's a corporation to harness it. While Moira Media's head offices are officially downtown, the bulk of its employees work in its spacious offices in Sappir Village, where they work on one of its thousands of magazine brands or making copy for its thriving ad business. Moira Media is the largest employer in Sappir Village, and while it promises work where one can be creative, it's almost always finding creative ways to sell the products and lifestyle created by other corporations.

DEMAR APOTHECARIUM

South side of Sappir Village

The most august business in Sappir Village, Demar Apothecarium is one of the many old mage businesses transitioning to the new world. Helmed by Shardrak Demar, a talented chemical mage, most of Demar Apothecarium's Business is in boutique pharmaceutical drugs adjusted from old alchemical recipes, though a small chemical plant has begun mass producing some of their highest volume compounds. In addition to pharmaceuticals, Demar Apothecarium also produces a range of perfumes, and the Demar family is a longstanding patron of the arts.

LAWJACKS

Main Outpost Central Sappir Village

While the rest of Sappir Village consists of buildings in different colors and decorations, each expressing their own opinion, the Lawjack Outpost is a featureless four story tower of tinted ballistic glass, as if implying that the Lawjacks are always watching, unaccountable to the community around them. That's at least the prevailing view of the Lawjacks—corrupt thugs, ready to harass, beat, or kill, as long as they can collect their money from the wealthy mages and corporations that hold the power, and collect their share of the deliquents' earnings when they work in the Purgatorium. In calmer times, the Lawjacks insist they merely keep the order—the current flashpoints have led few to believe that.

NOTABLE RELATIONS

SYLVESTER ORY

Goblin. 72. He/him

Sylvester Ory runs the popular kabob joint, ShhKabob. His cheesy sense of humor has only gotten sharper with age (ShhKabob only cracks the start of his puns), and Sylvester Ory is best known for spearheading the Sappir Village food bank, collecting extra food from local restaurants and other volunteers and ensuring it gets to people who can't afford it. Almost everyone who's fallen on hard times has run into Sylvester Ory, and he's a beloved member of the community for it.

GIERRE SUDRYL

Elf. 64. She/her

Gierre is an elf in her 60s who has appointed herself as unofficial archivist of Sappir Village. A professional photographer of some renown, she's taken it upon herself to document the various events, exhibits, and art created by the community. Almost everything that's known about Sappir Village's history is in Gierre's studious notes.

RESOURCES

PERFORMANCE SPACE

This is a resource where PCs and NPCs alike can promote, indulge, train, and share their artistic abilities and passions. Characters may spend 1 Downtime Action to make an Arts Test while performing here. Characters may also spend 1 Downtime Action to attend a performance (if no PC is performing, use the Community's Arts skill). If the performers succeed at a TN 13 Arts Test, those performing and attending gain 3 Animity or 1 Grit. On a Failure, no Grit or Animity is gained, and on a Dynamic Failure, all PCs involved lose 3 Animity or 1 Grit.

LAND TRUST

The Community has communal housing that it can provide to their Envoys or others who need it. For every 5 Regard you have with your Community, you decrease the cost of lifestyle maintenance by 1, to a minimum of 0.

VALUES

CULTURE IS IMPORTANT

Sappir Village prides itself as a creative community. Almost everyone has at least one artistic hobby, and even those that don't are patrons of the almost continuous streams of concerts, performances, and exhibits. The streets are adorned by murals and public sculptures, and "starving artist" is treated as an almost monastic calling. On the flip side, it is assumed that everyone will respect art, and vandalism or destruction of art is treated as the highest crime—culinary arts excepted (as long as destruction is done by mouth).

LIVE AND LET LIVE

To give people room to be creative, let people live their own lives and be open minded. Don't cause trouble for other people, and don't manufacture offense from something someone else does.

FOOD AND A BED

Art doesn't always pay well, and sometimes people fall onto bad luck. Luckily there's always extra food and a place away from the elements, and we make sure that no one is hungry on the street.

IMPULSES

INDULGENCE: FESTIVITIES

While there's always a steady stream of art around, Sappir Village prides itself in its art festivals. When tensions run high, these festivals become a source of escapism, running long into the night, leaving messes in the streets, and grinding many of the day to day workings of Sappir Village to a halt.

PHOBIA: TROUBLEMAKERS

Behind Sappir Village's "Live and let live" value is a constant concern that someone will take advantage of that tolerance to start making trouble for others. While weirdness and creativity are welcomed, when it crosses the line into causing problems, Sappir Village can start to turn on whoever is seen as the cause.

RECENT EVENTS

NOTABLE EVENTS IN MEMORY

THE SORROW MASSACRE

Two years ago, Sappir Village was struck by a series of brutal murders, characterized by a gruesomely bloody death combined with a seemingly unrelated quiet death within an hour. The pairs of deaths continued each night for a week before Dëaron Tor, a Lawjack watchdog brought in as attention mounted, spotted strange behavior by a young woman walking down the street, and on instinct discreetly followed her. He was close enough to hear the screams and rushed in to confront her as she, possessed by a Sorrow demon, attacked her victim.

Dëaron doesn't speak much of the events, but what is known is that he bested the demon, but not before both the possessed woman and her victim were killed. To this day Dëaron is widely met with reverent nods—nods he ignores, as whispers remain he's haunted by the events.

ONGOING TENSIONS

Sappir Village has recently undergone a number of events to put things on edge.

THE BREAK IN OF DEMAR APOTHECARIUM

Just over 2 months ago, Shardrak Demar reported that an unidentified group broke into his warehouse and stole over 1000 fortune worth of pharmaceutical products. He placed a bounty on anyone responsible for the theft, including a contribution to the local lawjack outpost to step up patrols and aid in the investigation. While the community was generally strongly against robbery, the increased Lawjack patrols were largely tolerated only due to residual good will to the Lawjacks in the wake of the Sorrow Massacre. The Lawjacks began to aggressively shake down various activists, Neo-Anarchists, and other rebels investigating the crime, raising tensions.

THE DEATH OF ENVOY HALKISH

Tensions broke just over 1 months ago, as Envoy Halkish, a well respected Envoy of Sappir Village was attacked by lawjacks in his home and killed as part of a struggle. The lawjacks cited evidence they had obtained that Envoy Halkish, a noted Aider, had been involved in the break in at Demar Apothecarium. Protests immediately erupted as the town split between the accusations that the Envoy had been behind the theft of a local business and the clear brutality of the lawjacks. Yesterday morning, public sentiment seemed clearly posed to push back the lawjacks, as leaked communications indicated that the lawjacks intended to rough up Envoy Halkish before they arrived and that he didn't struggle until he began to fear for his safety. Protests for the lawjacks to leave Sappir Village raged all day yesterday, interrupted only by a shock last night.

THE DEATH OF LAWMASTER FINN

Last night Lawmaster Finn, head of the local Lawjack outpost, was found murdered in a nearby alley. Immediately, Lawjacks from across Neo Babylon started to descend on Sappir Village, rounding up nearly every protester for questioning who didn't immediately scatter. While most were released, roughed up but alive, dozens remain in captivity, charged with assaulting a lawjack, a sentence with a fine hefty enough that many of them would spend years in the purgatorium. In response to this invasion by the lawjacks, Sappir Village called to elect a full slate of envoys to get to the bottom of this and diffuse the situation before it gets worse.

THE ELECTION OF THE ENVOYS

Electing Envoys was easier said than done. By tradition, Sappir Village holds a meeting where each nominee is put forward, and the top candidates who get a majority are selected as envoys. In the first round of votes, no candidate received a majority, as conflicting blocs emerged based on whether it was more important to investigate the Death of Envoy Halkish or resolve the situation with Lawmaster Finn. Eventually a compromise slate emerged:

- **Ashara Demar (she/her):** The rebellious daughter of Shardrak Demar and member of the Sappir art collective.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** A recent but charismatic arrival at Sappir Village, known to be a fellow Aider and associate of Envoy Halkish.
- **Dëaron Tor (they/them):** The Lawjack Watchdog responsible for ending the Sorrow Massacre going toe to toe with a malevolent demon.
- **Hanna (she/her):** A journalist in the local newspaper, known to be handy with computers.
- **Iaree (he/him):** A Baru of Sayin who served as a trusted confidante of many in the community.
- **Katy (she/her):** An Air Yojin known for keeping an eye on those causing trouble in the village.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** A Force Mage with Sappir Works, known for a level head (and heretofore refusing any previous efforts to make him an envoy).
- **Isme (she/her):** A junkyard jumper who works for Demar Apothecarium known for her ability to get anything to work, as well as getting into fights with anyone who's being a problem.

USING PREMADE CHARACTERS FOR OTHER ADVENTURES

Many of the details of the premade characters provide specific hooks for resolving the situations immediately following the Death of Lawmaster Finn. If you are using them for other adventures, you should assume the situation has been largely resolved, and tensions have returned to normal—and the envoys, for whatever form their success took, have remained in their assignment to resolve further issues facing Sappir Village.

COMMUNITY NAME	TYPE	POWER	CASTE
SAPPIR VILLAGE	NEIGHBORHOOD	4	LOWER-MIDDLE

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY REBELLION
SUBVERSION

CORE INFORMATION

VALUES

1. Culture is Important: We value art and don't tolerate vandalism
2. Live and let LIve: Let people live their life unless they're taking advantage of other people
3. Food and a bed: Everyone deserves a place to stay and a warm meal

IMPULSE

Festivities: The infamous art festivals can devolve to chaos!

Impending threats, Bad news, Holidays, other excuses to party

Choose 1:
Distraction: -1 Downtime Action
Largesse: Gm gains Grit until players pay 5 Fortune

IMPULSE

Phobia: Trouble Makers
Our values let Some take advantage of us

unexplained/unsolved, Change problems, loss of control

Blame: Everyone takes 5 Animity damage and cannot regain Animity until the next Downtime

FACTIONS AND RELATIONS

NAME	POWER	DEFAULT REGARD	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECTS	DESCRIPTION
Sappir Village (community At lArge)	4	5	Arts	Service	What happens when you generally look for help from the community (Faction)
Sappir Art Collective	3	4	Arts	Teacher (Artist)	Artist commune where anyone can find a place to stay (Faction)
Moira Media	5	0	Arts	Employer	Media conglamerate and major employer in town (Faction)
Sappir Works	4	0	Tech	Clout	The town public works in charge of infrastructure (Faction)
Demar Apothecarium	4	0	Magic Arts	Swag (Drugs)	Longstanding, prestigious, and expensive magical drug maker (Faction)
Sylvester Ory	4	10	Arts	Care	Owner of ShhKabob, and organizer of the town foodbank (Goblin, 72, he/him)
Gierre Sudryl	4	10	Humanities	Information (Sappir Village History)	The self appointed town archivist, Gierre keeps track of (Elf, 64, She/her)

RESOURCES

NAME	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
PERFORMANCE SPACE	As a Downtime Action, You or community makes a TN 13 Arts Check. All who take a Downtime Action gain 3 Animity or 1 Grit	
LAND TRUST	Lifestyle Maintenance is reduced by 1 for each 5 regard you have with the community	

LAWJACKS

POWER	REGARD	LOCATION	NOTES
7 (5+2)	5	Town Center	Current Regard is boosting Influence

CURRENT REGARD: -10 | -5 | -1 | 5 | 10 | 15

MARTIAL LAW
COMMUNITY RESOURCES UNAVAILABLE
INCREASE POWER BY 4
INCREASE FINES FOR CRIMES BY 2

AGGRESSIVE
INCREASE POWER BY 2
INCREASE FINES FOR CRIMES BY 2

SUSPICIOUS
INCREASE POWER BY 1

NEUTRAL
NO EFFECT

PROTECTIVE
REDUCE FINES BY 3
HOSTILE FACTIONS HAVE -1 POWER

DEFERENTIAL
REDUCE FINES BY 5
HOSTILE FACTIONS HAVE -2 POWER
LAWJACKS PROVIDE +1D6 AND AUGMENT 3 ON OBSERVATION CHECKS

IGNORE ALL FINES LESS THAN 5 FORTUNE
TOKEN PRESENCE

IGNORE ALL FINES LESS THAN 3 FORTUNE
LIGHT PRESENCE

NORMAL PRESENCE

GEAR WITH ILLICIT GAINS +1 ILLICIT
CONCEALMENT TRACKS AGAINST LAWJACKS DECREASED BY 3
HIGH SECURITY

GEAR WITH ILLICIT GAINS +2 ILLICIT
CONCEALMENT TRACKS AGAINST LAWJACKS DECREASED BY 6
FULL RESPONSE

CURRENT POWER: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10

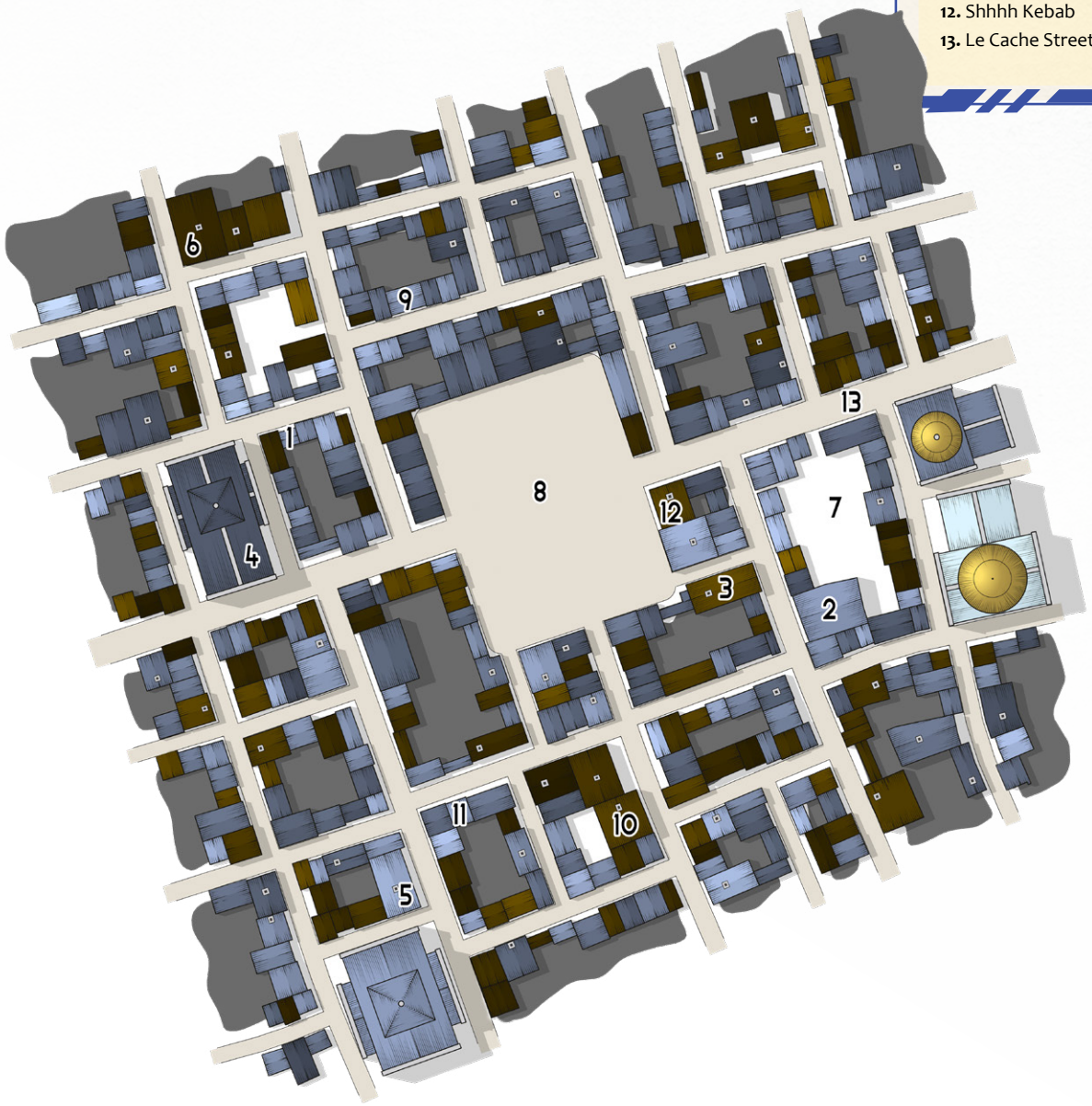
Envoys of Sappir Village

This section is in flux (as we work to assemble the pre-gens and incorporate our character sheet). It will probably be the last section finalized (as changes elsewhere in the rules are likely to change what pre-gen characters look like.

Envoys in Sappir Village

Every community handles their envoys a little differently. In Sappir Village, Envoys are nominated whenever an issue arrives that rises to the attention of the entire community—any nominee who receives above 50% of the vote becomes an envoy until they resign the position or a new vote is taken.

1. Gula Belmar's Home
2. Sappir Art Collective
3. Sappir Works
4. Moira Media
5. Demar Apothecarium
6. Lawjack Outpost
7. Franny Green outdoor venue
8. Sappir Square
9. Keneshu Dinner Theatre
10. The House of Blood and Sun (music venue)
11. Tophie's Apartment
12. Shhhh Kebab
13. Le Cache Street



ASHARA

The Rebel

Ashara is the daughter of Shardrak and Ansa Demar, the extremely wealthy and powerful mages who own Demar Apothecary, one of the major employers in town. Groomed for a privileged life, Ashara rebelled against her upbringing, falling in with the underground arts scene and the Neo Anarchist movement.

ABILITIES

Ashara is a talented artist and illusionist, skills she can use with creativity to help distract and obscure. Additionally, she has the charisma, social aptitude, and zeal to inspire those around her to greater feats and persist in the face of adversity.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Ashara is an earnest idealist coming from a background of privilege and power. Ashara's Values and hooks center around the tension between believing in a better world, while benefiting from the current one.

Background

Most people who come into the colleges of Neo Babylon have already lived a pampered life. You were no exception. Born to a family with a long arcane tradition, it was expected that you would follow in their footsteps, either becoming an alchemist like your father, or perhaps studying pure magic like your mother. Every moment of your childhood was infused with a sense of gravity—a responsibility of your birthright to do great things, to become an important person.

You rebelled in little ways at first. You convinced your parents to replace your magic theory class with music, claiming you found it helpful to understand the arcane songs of magic. When you enrolled in the Academy, you joined the College of Light—a less practical course of study than your parents would prefer, but a begrudgingly acceptable one.

While you showed enough aptitude in the magical curriculum to pass your classes at the College of Light, you true passion was (and is) the arts. You devoured every arts course in the curriculum, participated in every play and art exhibit until the collegiate options felt lacking. Eventually you began to venture into the city, at first in the upper class art halls that catered to the people of your background, but those felt hollow, not quite scratching what you were looking for. Soon you began frequenting underground theaters and experimental art shows in abandoned warehouses.

You loved it. You loved the lack of pretense, the willingness for things to be real, ugly, messy. For someone who's entire life had been a carefully manicured facade, it was liberating to see people talk about the world how it really was.

At first you were the naive rich girl (and oh were you naive). Saved only by your genuine passion for the art, you, in fits and starts began to understand the counter-cultural crowd you'd fallen into. In some ways your naivete made you a swifter convert to the cause—without the cynicism of a lived life, every injustice that others tolerated that you had been shielded from struck you with the full force of righteous indignation. Maybe you never really shook off your parents brainwashing that you were destined to importance—but you never questioned that you could fix the world, replacing it's oppressive hierarchy with one that was actually built by the people, not above them.

Your extracurriculars eventually flunked you out of the college of light. You fell into the Sappir Artists Collective, working with fellow Neo-Anarchists and surreptitiously exploiting your family's wealth to build the movement. Despite your best efforts, your selection as an envoy was as much a matter of your name as your efforts—the representative of the Artist Collective most palatable to the "respectable" forces determined to wipe it out if that's what it took to restore order.

Who You Know

SHARDRAK DEMAR

Human, Age 55, he/him

Shardrak Demar is the proprietor of Demar Apothecarium, an old and established purveyor of Pharmaceuticals. While much of its business still resolves around magical synthesis, it has made the jump to modernity with several of its most popular drugs, setting up mass production lines.

More relevantly, however, Shardrak Demar is Ashara's father. Their Relation is strained since she left the College of Light and spending her time with artists and Neo Anarchists, but it is cordial enough to ask minor favors and deep enough that he would nonetheless do what he could to protect her, even if he's unlikely to help her for her current "hobbies".

ANSA DEMAR

Human, Age 55, she/her

Ashara's mother, Ansa, met Shardrak while they were both enrolled in the Colleges. Ansa is an accomplished magical theoretician, though she also helps with some of the magic with the family business. Ansa's relationship with Ashara's is less strained than her fathers, and she's even gone to the effort to attend some of Ashara's exhibits, though much to Ashara's dismay she spends more time inspecting the illusion-craft than the art itself.

SAPPIR ART COLLECTIVE

Faction. North side of Sappir Village

The Sappir Art Collective is made up of about 30 individuals inhabiting an old abandoned mage-stone warehouse in the north part of Sappir Village. Originating from the village's conviction that everyone would have a place to stay, it quickly became the home for artists and other creatives willing to live in substandard conditions for a chance to make their art. Over the years, this work has paid dividends, as each generation of artists have renovated the building, turning it into a rather pleasant place to live

NEO ANARCHISTS

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

Maybe after a lifetime of being told what you should do, it wasn't surprising that the message of the Neo Anarchists resonated with you. The feeling wasn't quite mutual at first—a rich mage scion of a wealthy household bred a lot of suspicion, but grudgingly (and through no small amount of actions contributing your abilities and resources to advancing fellow Neo Anarchists), you've earned a modicum of success, and can call on them to help you out.

OTHER ENVOYS

- **Abimaras (he/him):** Abi is new to town, but with charm and conviction has already won over a bunch of your friends. You've gotten to know him in passing as he's staying with Sappir Art Collective.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** Like everyone, you know who Dëaron is—you know that they ended the demon and halted the growing body count, and you've seen them walk through the streets, always caught in their own thoughts. You know too many friends who've gotten cracked ribs and electric baton burns to ever be in the Lawjack's corner, but maybe there's some good to come out of corrupt places. Selfishly, you have to believe that.
- **Hanna (she/her):** You had seen Hanna in passing before, but never gave the journalist much thought until she broke the story on Envoy Halkish's murder by the Lawjacks. For that, in your book, she's a hero.
- **Iaree (he/him):** You've confessed everything from your first romantic tryst behind your parents back to your bumbling efforts to fit in with the Sappir Art Collective to your many tiny betrayals of your families trusts to Iaree. For all that, you know nothing about him—which, in the way of Baru of Sayin, makes you trust your secrets safety even more.
- **Katy (she/her):** Katy is your hero. If you can parlay your abilities into helping people half as well as she does, you'll feel like maybe you've managed to finally do some good. She's been gracious the few times you've awkwardly socialized with her at bars, but your normal skill with words may have been overcome by your desire to fan-girl a little. But she's awesome.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** You first met Sebastin when he came to fix some leaks in the Collective. You were excited to talk shop with another mage—a conversation stymied by his ignorance of half the terms you used. After politely excusing himself, he did the most clever bit of force magic you've seen to patch the leak, and since then you've tried to get him to teach you a bit more force magic, to modest success. Still, Sebastin's seemingly unending font of clever solutions has permanently shunted you to second favorite mage among most of the Art Collective. You can't blame them—it's nice when things work.
- **Isme (she/them):** You knew Isme first because she worked for your father, maintaining the surveillance drones around Demar Apothecarium and piloting the vehicles your family used to get around. You've run into her a few times after that, and she always refers to you as Miss Demar—you're certain as a means to annoy you.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME

ASHARA DEMAR

PRONOUNS: she/her

LINEAGE: Human

ORIGIN: Babylonian

BACKGROUND: Apprentice Caster

FORTUNE: CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL

CASTE: Upper

DEBT: 1 (To Shardrak Demar)

AGILITY	BRAWN
1	1
WIT	**CHARISMA**
1	3
AWARENESS	**WILL**
2	3

The Rebel

VALUES

IDEOLOGY — NEO ANARCHIST

I will strive to give everyone the ability to choose their own life absent any external edicts or expectations

VALUE — ART IS TRUTH

I will never be part of propaganda or glamorize or obscure injustice

VALUE — PRIVILEGE IS RESPONSIBILITY

I will use my magic, talents, and resources to help those who were not given them

VALUE — ADMIT FAULT

When I'm an idiot or do something wrong, I will always apologize and admit Fault

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
10	10	12	8	2	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /24 MAX	CURRENT /9 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

IMPULSES

NAME

Impetuous

You are full of good intentions, but your enthusiasm often outruns your willingness to think Things through, and your privileged upbringing often reveals blindspots

TRIGGERS

* Coming up with a plan that sounds good (But Isn't)
* Encountering a problem you never had to deal with
* Making a Snap decision on How to treat someone

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

Trouble

Gain 2 Grit and PC and GM each choose 1: take 5 Irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose 1 Fortune, break 1 piece of gear, decrease Base Regard of a Relation by 1.

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL (DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	0	3	0	3D6+3 D - R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	0	3	0	3D6+3 D - R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	0	1	0	3D6+1 D - R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	2	3	0	5D6+3 D - R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	2	3	0	5D6+3 D - R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D4 R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	0	2	0	3D6+2 D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	0	1	0	3D6+1 D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	2	0	3D6+1 D4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D4 R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D4 R -
TECH	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D4 R -

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Fine Arts	pg 141	Gain +1d6 to Influence and deception Tests with individuals from Upper-Middle Caste or higher.
Gifted	pg 141	1/Session, spend 1 Grit to undertake artistic endeavor. TN 12 – on success, restore 3 Grit to an ally.
Inspire	pg 141	Make a TN 10 Arts Test, on a success, restore 5 Animity damage. Once per Character per Session.
Rouse	pg 148	Roll Arts versus TN 12. If successful, each ally gains +1 dice to their next action.
Arcane Caster	pg 62	You may spend a Main Action to Harmonize a light or force bar (up to a max of 1 each)
Minor Illusion	pg 167	spend one light bar to make a visual illusion up to 2m wide
Major Illusion	pg 167	spend one accumulated light and force bar to make a Visual and auditory illusion up to 2m wide
Good Reputation	pg 130	gain +1 Base Regard with your Community and all starting Relations.
Force Of Will	pg 85	Increase Will to 2

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
NobleUr

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Family Tensions

Ashaya has rejected the planned life of power and luxury her parents laid out for her, and is ideologically determined to bring the powerful down—power that includes her family.

Privileged Rebel

Ashaya is devoted to making a better world, but she was raised in privilege and occasionally struggles to understand the real stakes and consequences of the cause.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Shardrak Demar	Magic Arts	Swag (Pharmaceuticals) (pg 123) / Paternalistic (pg 124)	6	5(0/11)	Your Father, Who will protect you but not help you (at least help you want)
Ansa Demar	Magic Arts	Information (Magical Theory) (pg 123)	4	11	Your mother, whose love is more unconditional
Sappir Art Collective	Arts	Teacher (Artist) (Faction) (pg 123)	5	6	Your home, albeit one at times suspicious of you
Neo Anarchists	Influence	Connection (Faction) (pg 122)	5	6	Your cause, though doubly suspicious of you at times

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Halogram	pg 100	Top of the Line halo. Security Rating 15, Firewall 10
Universal Translator	pg 101	You may speak in any common language. you are at a -2 on any social rolls relying on this
Synthleather Clothing	pg 110	Stylish and modestly protective. +2 Armor
Apotropaic Amulet	pg 104	1 use. Interrupt Action. User may trigger the amulet to increase their Aegis by 5 for 1 effect targeting them. If the target is a spell and fails to affect the target, spell is Dispelled.
Tseru	pg 104	harmonize a bar of mana matching the type of energy as a Free Action once per Round, after which the Tseru is spent.

ABIMARAS

The Medicine Thief

Abimaras grew up in the Undercity. Impoverished and resource starved, Abimaras learned to make do—without stanz, without medicine, and without the functional use of his legs. Not content to let things be, when his family became sick he embarked on a plan to steal the medicine he needed. Since then, Abimaris has escalated in his conviction that it is acceptable—no, more than that, a moral imperative—to procure that which the least well off need, even if it's from those who have it now.

ABILITIES

Charismatic and charming, Abimaras uses his wit and others' tendency to underestimate him and his wheelchair to worm his way into positions where he can do the most good—which often means stealing from the well to due to help those in need. Abimaras is a skilled burglar, combining patience, guile, and practiced physicality to slip in and out with no one being suspicious.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Abimaris is determined to help people, even if he needs to steal or trick his way into making that happen. Abimaris's Values and hooks center around his determination to make the world a better place, and trying to take care of (and remain connected with) his family in the undercity even as he's managed to "escape" into a better place.

Background

You never wanted to get involved with gangs. Growing up in the Undercity, you struggled to find your place, but you learned to take care of yourself, build and fix your own wheelchair, help defend your local community, and do your best. When your beloved father and many others fell sick, you had to do something. You concocted a plan, conscripted a breacher friend, and snuck out of the Undercity to rob a pharmacy. You got the cyproserum and saved lives, and when the Lawjacks came, you gave yourself up to save your friend.

For this, you spent some time "paying your debt to society" with hard labor. After you finally got out of Purgatorium, you briefly took up a career contracting for the gangs of the Undercity; not committed to any of them, but putting all your resources back into your own little neighborhood. It is a struggle to remain neutral surrounded by gangs, but you made friends among the Flaming Skulls and the Bulls of Heaven… everyone seems to know and like you.

Stability never lasts long in the Undercity—when the head of the Flaming Skulls, Drakaina, was killed, the gangs erupted in all out warfare. Being neutral was harder, and eventually you managed to get your hands on a Graylo that gave you an identity as a licensed food exporter that let you pass between the Undercity and Overcity. Ironically, the fake ID you purchased is what led you to meet Halkish—Halkish was looking for someone to help unload a bunch of extra infant formula the aiders had on their hands. You were more than happy to pass it on, though Halkish quickly garnered you weren't actually a food exporter. Soon though, you were working with Halkish, helping pass on what extra food and medicine you could get your hands on to those who needed it in the Undercity.

The break-in at the Demar Apothecarium was your brainchild, born over months of conversation with Halkish. A warehouse full of medicines, and an Undercity that needed them. A perfect plan: simple, easy. But just when it seemed like you'd gotten away with it, just when your contact Raz and some other friends from the Bulls had helped smuggle the meds into the Undercity and get them to a free clinic, the Lawjacks cracked down, and your dear friend Halkish lost his life.

The irony of being selected as an envoy when your actions led directly to the death of your Halkish, the riots... everything that's happening is your fault, in a way. But you would do it all again. Right is right, and those medicines saved lives. Now, you're in a position to save more. You can investigate Halkish's death, you can help diffuse the tensions, and you can help calm the community. Now, you are an envoy.

Who You Know

AIDERS

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

When you got out of the undercity, you were intent to find a way to keep on helping people. You quickly met Halkish, and through him were introduced to the Aiders—a semi-organized group of people working to provide medical and humanitarian help wherever they could. You fit in immediately—and with your connections to the undercity provided opportunities to help out that quickly taxed the available resources of the Aiders... leading towards the unfortunate decision to steal more. While Halkish died as a result of that raid, you know dozens of doctors, medics, and more through him that are more than happy to help you out if need be—especially if it's on behalf of people who can't get help any other place.

RAZ

Yettin, Age 24, they/them

Most people who rise to the level of being able to leave the undercity, leave and don't look back. You got to know Raz in your shared stint in the purgatorium—when they got out, they caught the attention of a team of freebooters looking for some muscle and ties to the undercity. Since then, Raz has been your go-to contact for getting in and out of the undercity—or if you need a tough looking yettin ready for trouble.

CHAR

Human, Age 26, she/her

Char is the flame-obsessed gutterwitch enforcer of the Flaming Skulls gang. She is loyal to the undercity gang mostly because they are wild enough to let her burn things merrily, and cruel enough to encourage her. She is an explosive, but handled carefully, a shaped charge; so long as she keeps her power and fury aimed at her enemies she is a valuable ally. You met her in the middle of a firefight, and, helping each other, formed a bond. You didn't join her gang, but you gained a friend.

OTHER ENVOYS

- **Ashara (she/her):** Staying with the Sappir Arts Collective, you've met Ashara in passing. She seems earnest enough, though you are a bit suspicious after learning she's the heir to the Demar fortune.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** You've only heard about demons in stories—you've experienced far more evil from casual Lawjack brutality than any magical boogeyman. You're not about to trust a lawjack, especially after what they did to Halkish. Still, you've seen Dëaron in passing, and you've known enough people with trauma to recognize the look.
- **Hanna (she/her):** You met Hanna while she was reporting about Halkish's death—she seemed dilligent and intent on getting to the truth (moreso than you'd have expected from most corporate media). There was something a bit weird with how the story played out—she seemed to know about some of the leaked Lawjack footage before anyone else, but officially speaking she claimed that she got the footage from the protesters—which makes you think she might be more involved than her dispassionate beat reporter guise might suggest.
- **Iaree (he/him):** You never had much room for faith in the undercity, and Iaree might have been the first proper Baru you've met. He seemed quiet and unassuming, and you don't know how much to attribute to him, and how much that's just par for the course of Baru of Sayin and their reverence of secrets.
- **Katy (she/her):** Your second night in Sappir Village, some drunk decided to give you a hard time trying to squeeze into a table at the local divebar. Katy told him to be nice to visitors. She didn't need to rough him up for you to appreciate the implicit dynamic—Katy was the sort that no one messed with, and she made it clear that messing unfairly with anyone was messing with her. You know a few good folk like that in the undercity, and they're all heroes in your book. You had a good conversation with her—she seems nice, earnest, and all around decent (and you promised to go to her performance, some dance/theater thing?)
- **Sebastin (he/him):** When you first came to Sappir Village, your wheelchair was a bit worse for the wear and needed some help—Halkish told you to go to Sebastin and he'd fix it up quick. Two minutes in the machine shop later, Sebastin had your wheelchair working better than it ever had in your life—free of charge. He seemed friendly enough from the idle chitchat—but his actions impressed you way more than his casual demeanor. You gather you're not the only one who holds him in high regard.
- **Isme (she/them):** You met Isme the night of the break-in at Demar Apothecarium. As a jumper on the payroll of Demar Apothecarium, she was in charge of the security, and your job was to make sure she didn't take a closer look, so you put on the most of your charm and tried to keep her engaged in chit-chat and genorously shared alcohol to distract her from anything that might ping through her Halo. It worked, and you got along well—she seemed unpretentious and likeable, if a bit ready to argue for the sake of a good argument, but you almost felt bad for meeting her under false pretenses.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME ABIMARAS

The Medicine Thief

PRONOUNS	He/Him
LINEAGE	Human
ORIGIN	Babylonian
BACKGROUND	Downtrodden
FORTUNE	CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL
CASTE	Undercity
DEBT	None

AGILITY	2
BRAWN	2
WIT	0
CHARISMA	3
AWARENESS	1
WILL	2

VALUES

IDEOLOGY AIDER
I will always provide the aid I can to the people who need it most.

VALUE TO EACH BY THEIR NEED
I will get people what they need, regardless of legality if it's the only way to get it.

VALUE LOOK AFTER FAMILY
I will look after my family and make sure they're ok

VALUE BUILDING BEATS DESTROYING
I will always seek to find a way to solve a problem by helping someone before I resort to conflict

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
12	8	10	8	2	1

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /20 MAX	CURRENT /24 MAX	CURRENT /10 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL (DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	-	3	0	3D6+3 D 4 R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	2	3	0	5D6+3 D - R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D 4 R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	2	3	0	5D6+3 D - R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	-	2	0	3D6+2 D 4 R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	-	2	0	3D6+2 D 4 R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	0	2	0	3D6+2 D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	2	2	0	5D6+2 D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	2	0	3D6+2 D 4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	0	2	0	3D6+2 D - R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D 4 R -
TECH	(WIT)	0	1	0	3D6+1 D - R -

IMPULSES

NAME
Impetuous

You are full of Good intentions, but your enthusiasm often outruns your willingness to think Things through.

TRIGGERS

* Coming up with a plan that sounds good (But Isn't)
* Encountering a problem you never had to deal with
* Making a Snap decision on How to treat someone

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME
Trouble

Gain 2 Grit and PC and GM each choose 1: take 5 irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose 1 fortune, break 1 piece of gear, decrease Base Regard of a Relation by 1.

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Driven	pg 85	Gain + 2 max Grit
Breaking and Entering	pg 152	+1d6 to Observation or physicality Tests made to observe or bypass physical security
Light Fingers	pg 153	+1d6 on all Tests of sleight of hand, pickpocketing, or lockpicking. Lose a maximum of 1 concealment as consequence for a failure.
Inconspicuous	pg 153	You prevent concealment loss at a rate of 1 Grit/ 2 concealment
Nothing to Lose	pg 153	Spend 4 Grit after rolling to gain +5 on a Test
Don't Give Up	pg 140	Spend 1 Grit as a Main Action. Target Ally gains +2d6 and is Inspired on their next roll.
Look at me!	pg 140	Roll Deception vs Vigilance. On a success, the target takes a –5 penalty on any Tests targeting someone other than you as long as you use a backup action each turn to continue distracting the target.
Adaptable Bearing	pg 128	Once per session, you may gain +1d6 on any Test.

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
Chaldani

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Criminal with a cause

Abimaras is determined to take what he can from the Uppercity to help the people who need it the most.

Out of the Undercity

While abimimaras is out of the undercity, his family and friends are still trapped There. Up here he can connect with resources to help them, but how does he grapple with helping them while not being around them?

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Aiders	Science	Care (pg 122)	5	5	Your cause—finding ways to help people who need help
Raz	Melee Combat	Transport (pg 124)	4	15	A friend from the undercity, good for going places, a fight, or a laugh
Char	Magic Arts	Employer (pg 123)	6	5	A high-ranking Enforcer with the undercity Gang, the Flaming Skulls

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Graylo	pg 99	Halo with alternative identity on it
Auto-Intruder	pg 105	Reliable 3 on Physicality or Tech Rolls to bypass Locks and Alarms. May be used as cyberkit for security systems.
Taser	pg 109	Ranged weapon, Range 10m, 2d6 damage, Nonlethal, Shock
Synthleather Clothing	pg 110	+2 Armor

DËARON TOR

The Tortured Watchdog

In a town where Lawjacks are almost universely distained, Dëaron is the exception. The hero who stopped a demonic serial killer, Dëaron remains haunted by the experience, grappling with their memories, their failings, and their tenuous relationship with the drug Nonchallance.

ABILITIES

Dëaron is a talented watchdog, an expert at sizing up the scene and interpreting the clues (as well as tailing suspects, as the case requires). Their specialty is magical phenomenon, and they have a particularly aptitude in understanding and stopping magical threats. In combat situations, they are also a decent shot with their Taser.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Dëaron sits uneasily as the most respected lawjack in a neighborhood where lawjack brutality has triggered protests, and following the death of Lawmaster Finn, a brutal Lawjack crackdown—all while grappling with their own trauma and problems. Dêaron's Values, Impulses, and hooks center around grappling with the tension from their desire to protect people and the role of the Lawjacks in society, and keeping moving forward without fully succumbing to apathy and letting the bad parts of the world just fade away into nothingness.

Background

You're a fragging hero. That's what they tell you, with a hint of sympathy. They've all seen the photos of the crime scene, they've heard how you, covered in blood, told the EMTs that the demon was dealt with before you lost consciousness. The Sorrow Massacre, the nightly murders and terror was finished, because of you.

Everyone assumes your detachment is because of trauma, that you didn't get Nonchalance quickly enough, or that for whatever reason it didn't work on you. PTSD wasn't supposed to be a thing anymore to those who had modern medical attention, but everyone still knew the stereotype of the haunted fairy war veteran to know what it was supposed to look like. Hollow stare, disconnected from reality, nightmares.

You don't bother to correct them. The worse part is the nonchalance worked. You remember that night, the demon's taunts, the screams, your desperate efforts to keep them alive, your failure to do so: all in perfect clinical detail, stripped away of any emotion, just like nonchalance is supposed to do. You don't have nightmares, you don't have triggers, you just have the horrifying memories… that mean nothing to you.

That's the part that haunts you. Because that's the thing—you know you should feel something. You should feel anger, loss, disappointment, even fear. Every time the memory comes up, and it comes up again and again, you know you should care, that you should be horrified. People think you're a broken person—your greatest fear is you indifference has stolen the person part away.

You have too much PR value to the Lawjacks for them to care too much about whether you are fit to do your job. You investigate what they tell you to investigate, diligently make your reports, and don't worry too much which ones got acted on and which ones disappeared into the void. You were a hero, the one who could leave work amid the protests and the line would part to let you pass with only a solemn nod. You were grateful that they let you pass—your friend Eamar explained that the protests were about an Envoy the Lawjacks killed, seemingly premeditated. You tried not to form an opinion—you have too much empathy for people who can ignore suffering these days, which upsets you. One day at a time, just focus on the job and the cases it's your job to investigate.

That is, until it became your job to investigate. The head of your outpost, Lawmaster Finn was killed last night. Out of district lawjacks swarmed in, making a show of force in arresting protesters and anyone who looked like a suspect, regardless of feasibility of guilt (you could have told them who to focus on, if they'd asked. They didn't, you didn't push). The events led for calls to elect envoys to deal with the situation. You didn't pay too much attention—you showed up, not planning to vote. After the first few rounds emerged deadlocked, you were approached by Orly, a well known restaurant owner, if you would accept a nomination for envoy.

Why not? It's a job, a task, something to put one foot in front of the other. You gathered later that it was a compromise between the bloc focused on Lawmaster Finn and the bloc focused on Envoy Halkish, and that you were the only Lawjack acceptable to both sides.

So now it's your job to figure this out. Find out what happened, make the report, let this be the tiny part of the world that you can handle engaging with.

WHO YOU KNOW

RELATIONS

ACACIALIS GEOLOGO

Goblin, Age 52, he/him

You cycled through a half dozen Lawjack provided therapists after the massacre—Acacialis is the one who stuck. Perhaps what made them work was their decidedly unclinical style—Acacialis is an accomplished painter and poet with an interest in the mythic and divine. If nothing else, you benefit from the ease at which they converse about the nature of good and evil and cosmic battles for the meaning of the universe—somehow, it helps you find perspective to feel so small.

KISHAR EAMAR

Dwarf, age 31, she/her

One of your better friends among the Lawjacks, Kishar Eamar handles breaching into seized devices with the Lawjacks, and has helped you nab a few bits of info on secure systems in a pinch (even if she'd technically be on the hook for the fine if she got caught). She's one of the Lawjacks most focussed on the point of catching people to make other people safe—a point you know stems from her own experience of losing her mom to a mugging gone wrong.

LAWJACKS

Faction (authority)

You've been with the lawjacks your entire professional life, and even before the Massacre had a good reputation for doing solid work hunting down violent criminals and making sure they spent their time in the Purgatorium. After the demon, you're both an internal and external hero, though whispers correctly note that you're maybe missing a step or two, retreating from the world. You still do your job, and can still expect help and favors from the Lawjacks, though.

OTHER ENVOYS

- **Ashara (she/her):** The only child of the Demar family, rumors you've heard around the station is that she's rebelling against her parents and cosplaying as a revolutionary with the Art Collective.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** He briefly showed up as a person of interest when the Demar Apothecarium break-in happened—a newcomer tied to the aiders with possible ties to the undercity. He had a solid alibi—a crowded bar all night—for the break-in itself though, and while your instinct is that there might be some connection, the focus quickly coalesced on Halkish's role actually breaking in.
- **Hanna (she/her):** You know the signs of when someone is a true master of observation. Hanna is good—she'd be wasted as puff piece writer for the local media, but you weren't surprised when she dropped the scoop on the leaked footage. She got called in when the Lawjacks tried to get to her source, but her story—that it was already out among the protesters—checked out, and her editor had the receipts to back her up. You don't think she "just" stumbled across it though.
- **Iaree (he/him):** It's supposed to help to unload all your secrets to a Baru of the mantle of Secrets—and maybe it did, a little. To Iaree's credit and professionalism, he never judged you and never treated you different, even after you told him everything (about the Massacre, about the Nonchallance, about everything else going on). You can't help but respect his devotion to his calling.
- **Katy (she/her):** You know of a dozen assaults where Katy intervened before something truly bad happened, and you suspect there are hundreds more. While a few times Katy's gotten a fine for assault getting into problems, they've always been paid promptly—you suspect by others, but if others are willing to intercede for what she did on their behalf, that's how the system is supposed to work.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** You've met with Sebastin a few times when you needed some info pulled from cameras, or had some questions about the sewers or utility tunnels around Sappir Village. You were impressed by his skill and knowledge, though you were both happy to keep the interactions prompt and professional.
- **Isme (she/them):** A frequent minor troublemaker, her employment by the Demars means she has the ability to pay of the (minor) problems she gets into. She's one of the few people who have generally treated you straightforwardly since the masssacre.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME DĒARON TOR

PRONOUNS	They/THem
LINEAGE	Elf
ORIGIN	Babylonian
BACKGROUND	Influential
FORTUNE	CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL
CASTE	Lower Middle
DEBT	

The Tortured Watchdog

AGILITY	3
BRAWN	1
WIT	2
CHARISMA	0
AWARENESS	3
WILL	0

VALUES

IDEOLOGY GREASER

I will always work to make the system work better.

VALUE PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

I won't allow someone to come to harm if I'm the only one who can stop it.

VALUE ONE DAY AT A TIME

I will do my best today, regardless of what happened yesterday or will happen tomorrow

VALUE NOT MY PROBLEM (CORRUPTED)

I will do the best for my job, but I won't deal with a problem unless it's my job or i'm the only one who can do it.

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
14	12	15	16	2	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /12 MAX	CURRENT /6 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

IMPULSES

NAME

Nonchallance Addiction

You still struggle with coping with the trauma of the sorrow Massacre and your use of nonchalance (see pg 102) in response to those events. You rely on nonchalance to deal with trauma.

TRIGGERS

* Taking Animity damage
* Strong reminders of the Sorrow Massacre
* Stress or strong emotional discomfort

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

Night Out (IN)

You spiral into wiping away your cares with nonchalance, sitting with your memories and wiping away their emotions. Spend 1 Fortune, Recover 3 Grit, the GM gains 5 Grit.

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL	(DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	-	0	0	3D6	D 4 R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	-	0	0	3D6	D 4 R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	0	2	0	3D6+2	D - R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	1	0	0	4D6	D - R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	0	0	0	3D6	D - R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	2	3	0	5D6+4	D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	0	3/1	0	3D6+3/1	D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	3	0	3D6+3	D 4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	1	2	0	4D6+2	D - R -
TECH	(WIT)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Watch Closely	pg 151	Gain +1d6 Observation when observing a person or situation, and Physicality Tests to remain hidden while tailing someone
Scan the Scene	pg 151	Gain +1d6 on Observation rolls when looking for clues or concealed Objects. 1/ Session use a backup action to take a TN 12 Observation Test. On a Success, Gain +1 on all defenses for remainder of the scene.
Dogged	pg 152	Once per session, after failing a skill Test you may take 5 Animity or 5 health damage to gain a +5 on the roll.
Mundane Countermeasures	pg 144	Gain a bonus to Aegis equal to ranks in Magic Arts
Magic, In Theory	pg 143	Gain a bonus to Magic Arts rolls to know about Magic equal to ranks in Magic Arts
Break the Flow of Magic	pg 144	Spend 1 Grit when you do damage to a magic user or entity to disrupt their magic
Basic Datajack	pg 157	Gain Reliable 2 on Checks to use any device you are directly connected to
Keen Eye	pg 83	+1 dice to Observation rolls
Adaptable Bearing	pg 128	Once per session, you may gain +1d6 on any Test

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
Fae

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Demons from the Past

You are fixated on the events of the Sorrow Massacre two years ago—what you saw, who you couldn't save, and the fact that you can't feel anything about it due to the effects of the drug nonchalance. You're haunted, which distracts you from anything else going on.

Lawjack Hero?

the lawjacks have a (deserved) reputation as brutal thugs, and sappir village is inflamed at the latest visible case of brutality. Nonetheless, you're still a hero. Can you continue to stand for a vision of lawjacks that protect, or will your affiliation drag your down to the regard of your colleagues.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	5	4	A town of artists you can ask for help
Lawjacks	Melee Combat	Clout (Faction) (pg 122)	7	4	Your employer, and your Purpose, if you have one anymore
Kishar Eamar	Tech	Service (pg 123)	4	10	Your friend, a tech savy Lawjack Breacher
Acacialis Geologo	Arts	Care (pg 122)	4	10	Your therapist, an extravagant artist with a love of epic and myth

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Nonchalance (x3 doses)	pg 103	Description
Bug Sweeper	pg 105	+2 on all Tech or Observation Rolls to detect surveillance, Can jam all devices within 100m that fail a TN 14 Tech. Can destroy small electronics it touches.
Portable Laboratory	pg 102	Gain +1 on all Science rolls to analyze something you can directly inspect
Taser	pg 109	10m range, 2d6 damage, AP2, Nonlethal, Shock
Synthleather Clothing	pg 110	+2 Armor

HANNA

Information Liberator

Hanna is an investigative journalist devoted to the principles of transparency and accountability—far more radically than her corporate media day job would endorse, leading her to leak her more radioactive scoops on the cybernet to like minded individuals.

ABILITIES

Hanna's success in both roles is boosted by her talents as a skilled breacher—able to get into systems that others thought were private and use those to leak information and find new leads. That's not to understate her ability to hit the pavement and get the answers she needs by questioning people, or spending some time researching in the archives for the bit of information she needs.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Above everything else, Hanna is about hunting down and exposing the truth. Hanna's Values and hooks center around devotion to this ideal—and grappling with the small lies and compromises she makes to advance the larger goal of a world where everyone knows the stakes of the important issues at hand, and that corruption withers under the bright light of the truth.

BACKGROUND

Media is a world of the haves and have nots. Technically, you're a part of the haves—the Sappir Sentinel is a subsidiary of Moira Media, the second largest media conglomerate in Neo Babylon, viewed by a hundred million people every day for everything from fashion advice to construction trade magazines. It's heft, connections, money, and above all power means that, unlike a small underground newsletter, the Lawjacks are never going to fine someone to the purgatorium for some Ukkim's interpretation of defamation or a tenuous claim of excitement to violence.

The catch, however, is Moira Media isn't there to protect you, and its certainly not there to protect anything like truth or accountability—it's there to protect its long term brand value, audience base, and advertising potential. Sometimes that means backing good reporting that reveals a real problem—scandals are great stories, and everyone loves to hear the villain of the day, but just as often a perfectly good story gets shelved because it puts a major advertiser in a bad light, the victim has the power to fight back and hurt the brand, or maybe the audience has just "seen too many corruption stories recently" and "can't you find something new?".

You don't put up with that shet. You became a journalist because you believed that you can't get people to fix a problem they don't know about, and Moira Media's ability to pay you doesn't mean they can stop you from your calling, no matter what company-line spouting engagement focused editor tells you. You're good at your job, and get good stories (through a combination of soft reporting skills and the technical skills to get information off the cybernet that others thought was protected). If you get the chance to tell the story you want in the Sentinel, you do—it gets read by almost everyone in the town and beyond.

But when it doesn't, that doesn't mean the story dies. Despite your corporate paycheck, you're a Sunlighter, and that means that every story you write, every lead you get, every bit of corruption you find—all of it pops up on the halos of thousands of like minded individuals who'd rather know the truth than what an editor decides is the best story of the day (under various pseudonyms, most commonly Looking Glass). And every day, you get messages from other Sunlighters sharing the exact same thing. It requires a bit of technical knowhow and spy-craft to prevent getting swept up in a crackdown (or fired!), but you breach systems for info—the technical side is easy.

Which brings you to now. Diem, a Sunlighter embedded inside the Lawjacks leaked internal communications before the raid on Envoy Halkish, instructing the jacks in the raid to be sure to rough him up and "send a message that he stole from the wrong people", as well as footage showing Envoy Halkish not resisting the search until he started trying to defend himself from being beaten up on the ground.

You leaked it to a handful of protesters, enough to get it established in a few of your stories, before you came to your editor with the "scoop". Worried that it was already out there, your editor agreed to let you publish the story (and get all the attention)... and that's when the protests truly erupted.

You were there, filming the protests, prepping your next story when you got the message from Diem:

>> Might be in trouble. More info stashed in sewers near Lawjack Outpost, look for the sunlight...

Fifteen minutes later, you got the alert that Lawmaster Finn had been found dead outside the Lawjack Outpost. You rushed over to try and get a scoop, but the whole site was locked down by lawjacks swarming the scene—as well as the rest of Sappir Village. In the hours that followed, the protests were brutally dispersed. Soon thereafter, calls emerged for electing envoys to deal with the escalating problems, and get to the bottom of what actually happened.

Conveniently, that's what you do.

Who You Know

Relations

SUNLIGHTERS

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

For some, the ideological factions they most align with are just the best summary of their political and moral beliefs. For you, the Sunlighters represent the core of your identity. Every story you write, every secret you uncover, you anonymously leak to the Sunlighters, and those with the desire and technical wherewithal to find that information can find it. The flip side of your tireless devotion to the cause is you can expect aid when the tables are turned—if you need info, or to dig up a lead, you can always turn to your Sunlighter contacts for help.

DIEM

Identity Unknown

Your greatest source, you don't know who Diem is, nor do you want to—you can't accidentally burn someone if you don't know who they are. What you can gather, however, is they're deeply placed in the Lawjacks, and can leak you internal documents and discussions that very few people would have access too.

MOIRA MEDIA

Faction

You like to pretend you get your assignments from a higher moral calling, but Moira Media signs your paychecks and refunds your expense reports. While your editors are quick to discourage you from something that will get them in trouble with the powers that be, they're also able to get you access and support—as long as you can sell them the story.

Other Envoys

- **Ashara (she/her):** You're not one for long-form biopic magazine features, but you think Ashara Demar would be a fascinating subject for one. Wealthy scion of the Demar family, living in the artist housing and advancing Neo Anarchist politics—you've only talked to her a few times, and would love the chance to unpack her more.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** Abimaris got on your radar when you were doing a story about Aider nutrional programs and Envoy Halkish a few months ago. Abimaris was the Aiders link to the undercity, though you ended up editing that down as your attempts to fact check that point ran into inconsistencies between his official status as a food exporter and his reputation on the street as someone from the Undercity—though you could never quite pin down if he honestly made it out or had a fake ID.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** You wrote about the Sorrow Massacre—everyone did. You interviewed Dëaron afterwords—they provided you with a clinically accurate description of the events. From what you can gather, the impassive response was an impressive display of professionalism—it's an open secret that they've struggled to adjust since the attacks
- **Iaree (he/him):** You've never felt comfortable with Sayin, or the idea that secrets were worth worshipping. Some sunlighters try to bribe Baru to break their oaths of secrecy—none you know have had any luck with Iaree.
- **Katy (she/her):** Sometimes reporting is dangerous work. Less so when Katy's around. You've asked for favors a few times when you felt better with some backup—it speaks to who she is that she didn't know you well the first time when she said yes. Now you're friends.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** If you do your best to fill the waves with news Sappir Village needs to know, Sebastin makes sure the waves exist. You've helped out a few times with some of the electronics work—though he knows almost as much as you do.
- **Isme (she/them):** You bonded with Isme over a love of tech, and you trade software know-how for some feeds from her drones.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME HANNA

PRONOUNS She/Her

LINEAGE Orc

ORIGIN Babylonian

BACKGROUND Wage Slave

FORTUNE CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL

CASTE Lower Middle

DEBT

AGILITY	BRAWN
0	1
WIT	**CHARISMA**
3	2
AWARENESS	**WILL**
3	1

Information Liberator

VALUES

IDEOLOGY SUNLIGHTER
I will always expose corruption and exemplify transparency when wielding power.

VALUE THE TRUTH SETS YOU FREE
I will never hide a truth because it might be dangerous or have bad consequences when let free

VALUE SUBVERT THE SYSTEM
I will work with the system as a means to an end, but I will never sacrifice what matters to advance for advancements sake.

VALUE LOYALTY
I will always believe the best of people who have shown me loyalty or kindness

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
8	14	16	9	5	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /20 MAX	CURRENT /7 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

IMPULSES

NAME
Impetuous

You are full of Good intentions, but your enthusiasm often outruns your willingness to think Things through.

TRIGGERS

* Coming up with a plan that sounds good (But Isn't)
* Encountering a problem you never had to deal with
* Making a Snap decision on How to treat someone

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME
Trouble

Gain 2 Grit and PC and GM each choose 1: take 5 irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose 1 fortune, break 1 piece of gear, decrease Base Regard of a Relation by 1.

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL (DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	-	2	0	3D6+2 D 4 R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	1	2	0	3D6+2 D - R 2
HUMANITES	(WIT)	0	3	0	3D6+3 D - R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	0	2	0	3D6+2 D - R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	-	1	0	3D6+1 D 4 R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	-	0	0	3D6 D 4 R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	1	4	0	4D6+4 D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	0	0/1	0	3D6+0/1 D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	0	4	0	3D6+4 D - R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	-	0	0	3D6 D 4 R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	-	3	0	3D6+3 D 4 R -
TECH	(WIT)	2	3	0	5D6+3 D - R -

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Basic Datajack	pg 157	Gain Reliable 2 on all Tests with connected Halo, Cyberkit, or directly connected Device
Cyberkit	pg 157	Breaching Device. Security Rating 13, Firewall 10, Breach Power 8, Slicing +0. Enhancement Slots: 1/2
Control	pg 154	On successful Tech vs Security Rating Roll, cause a device to follow instruction until the end of it's next turn
Spoof Message	pg 155	On successful Tech vs Security Rating Roll, Make A Deception check with a +5 bonus to impersonate from someone else
Heads up Display	pg 155	As Main Action, increase the guard of all allies within 100m by 3 for 2 Rounds.
Adaptable Bearing	pg 128	Gain +1d6 on a roll of your choice 1/session
Destiny Through Passion	pg 85	+2 Aegis (already calculated)
Cyberkit Enhancement	pg 158	Improved Breach Power: Breach Power +3 (included in Cyberkit Calculation above)

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
Ghassulian

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Don't Hide Our Means

Hanna believes in transparency and honesty as a moral imperative. While small lies and omissions for a larger goal are (grudgingly acceptable), hiding important information from the public or engaging in secret plots or coverups go against everything Hanna believes

Pay the Bills

Beliefs and aspirations aside, you work for a corporate media behemoth that cares more about Ad dollars and subscription renewals than truth and justice. Still, Moira Media gives you (highly edited) reach, access, and most importantly, signs your paycheck.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Sunlighters	Humanities	Information: Politics (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	Your highest calling—and a network you call on for help
Diem	Tech	Information: Lawjack Operations (pg 123)	4	6	Your lawjack informant on the inside
Moira Media	Arts	Employer (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	Your employer that pays you for your work, as long as it doesn't interfere

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Bug-Sweeper	pg 105	+2 on all Tech or Observation Rolls to detect surveillance, Can Jam all devices within 100m that fail a TN 14 Tech. Can destroy small electronics it touches.
Digit-Alter	pg 101	+2 on Deception rolls to make Forgeries
Digital Presence	pg 101	All Influence rolls done remotely are Inspired
Armored Clothing	pg 110	5 Armor
Micro-Links	pg 106	20 miniature cameras and microphones. Require a TN 15 Observation or Tech Test to detect
Personal Halo	pg 99	Default Halo. Security Rating 10, Firewall 5

IAREE

Keeper of Secrets

Iaree is a Baru of Sayin and adherent to the mantle of Secrets. In his role as a Baru, he serves as confessor and confidant, and takes his vow of confidentiality seriously. He has no vow to not personally act on the information he knows, and by night seeks to enact justice as a vigilante, uncovering independent evidence he can use to reveal ongoing crimes, frighten those with a guilty conscious into confessing or making amends, and, for the most dire of situations, achieving vengeance on behalf of powerless victims.

ABILITIES

As a Baru of the Mantle of Secrets, Iaree's sacred magic pertains to keeping things hidden—abilities he combines with his own experience sneaking around and a surprising aptitude for attacking with his ceremonial staff or magesteel knife.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Iaree takes both his oath of secrecy and the his conviction that the world should be made just seriously—driving him to act directly based on knowledge given to him in confidence. Iaree's Values and hooks center around the tension between these two beliefs, and between his role as a respected Baru of Sayin by day and a vigilante by night.

BACKGROUND

For most Baru of Sayin, the oath to uphold the secrecy of those who confess to you is an oath of neutrality—to be a dispassionate and unjudging watcher.

That never sat right with you. The oath was to the gods, and that you'd never violate. But Sayin's power went to people, not rocks or empty confessionals—and surely that was a sign that you were supposed to act on that knowledge?

It started small—as a young acolyte at the great temple of Sayin in the center of Neo Babylon, you took the secrets of passer-bys. The easiest secrets to act on were the secrets of those who were afraid of retribution or scared of the future. You remember them all—the young girl with a too-forward boss, the shopkeep with the Lawjacks grabbing his wares without paying. You tailed the perpetrators, grabbing anonymous photos of their misdeeds and plastered them for all to see.

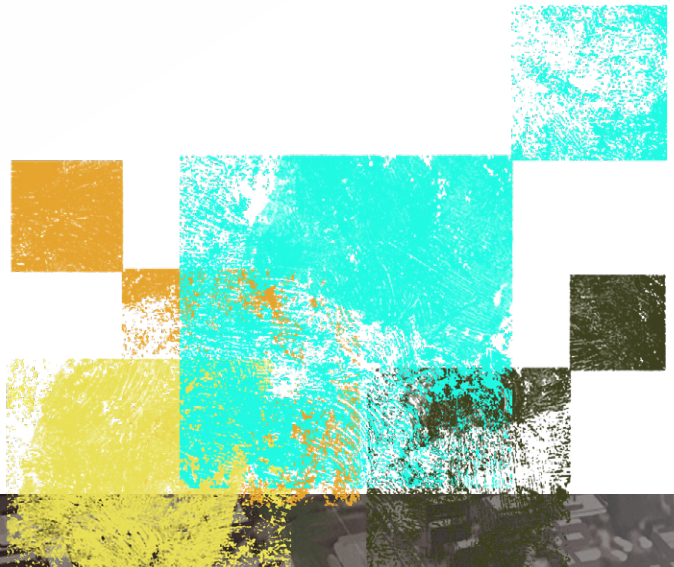
Was it that different when the perpetrator, rather than the victim, was the one to confess—particularly when it was done with no sign of hope to change? You started with shame and exposure as your weapon—photos and recordings of their misdeeds. You were no stranger to skullduggery, growing up a street urchin in Churuq before finding your way to the Temple of Sayin, and between your skill and the blessings of Sayin, you had no trouble breaking in to plant bugs or collect the evidence you needed.

Your interventions escalated. Micro-links turned to stealing incriminating evidence, and burglary eventually turned to vigilanteism. The first time you crossed the line was easy. A young man confided to Sayin that he intended to kill his ex, proudly extolling how much she deserved it. You followed him home, and before he could act on his intentions, slipped a blade into his ribcage.

Death is a rare intervention, though an anonymous specter, cloaked by your divine power, has used fear and violence to dissuade others from paths of harming others. The guilty speak of a vengeful spirit that stalk Sappir Village—but only in the quietest places, or confessed in secrecy to Sayin, lest their own secrets come out.

You are privy to many of the darkest secrets of Sappir Village—but also the signs of struggle against the darkness. You've heard the confessions of the Lawjacks who were told to leave Halkish as a bloody pulp as a message to other Aiders who might think to steal medicine from Demar Apothecarium—but you also heard from the Lawjack breacher feeding secrets to the Sunlighters so that all would know what would happen. You know the cheaters and the abusers, but also the secret crushes and the pregnancies too early to tell anyone but Sayin. You know the scared victims—but also the resolve of those who determined to fight against the world. They all tell you their secrets, believing Sayin is neutral.

She's not, though. She just works through mysterious ways—you.



Who You Know

Relations

Temple of Sayin

Faction. North Side of Sappir Village

The Temple of Sayin in Sappir Village is relatively small—you're the only full time Baru, though other acolytes in training frequently rotate through and there's a small office of (mostly part time) lay people that help tend to the administrative work and maintain the modest grounds around the temple. Still, the assistance they provide is invaluable for you and the community, and full-heartedly support your ministry (and are happy to help you out in less religiously important tasks as well).

Consecrated

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

Like many Baru, you count yourself aligned with the consecrated movement, believing there is great wisdom in seeking to understand the immense wisdom in the teachings and nature of the gods. You can always rely on some help from likeminded Baru and other consecrated wherever you go.

Gierre Sudryl

Elf. 64. She/her

The elven archivist is your closest friend, and the only person aware of the nature of your extracurricular activities, even if your vow leaves the details and reasoning shrouded in secrecy. She has helped you out a few times you've gotten in trouble, and keeps mum when you ask her to pull up old floorplans or details on someone in the community.

Other Envoys

- **Ashara (she/her):** You've known Ashara her entire adult life—you've heard everything from her first romantic tryst to her many conflicts with her parents as she pushed against the privileged life they made for her and (awkwardly—you've heard those stories too), become a Neo Anarchist and artist, pushing against the system she was raised in. She is earnest, if perhaps sometimes impulsive.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** A newcomer, Abimaras has never come to you, though you have heard of him through others, who generally speak of him in good terms with respect to his work with the aiders.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** Sayin grants you the gift to take secrets from others, letting them forget, though it's a gift you use carefully. Dëaron is a cautionary tale on what taking can do from someone. Others say they are haunted by what they saw—but that's only partially true. After the demonic massacre he witnessed, they were given Nonchallance to prevent PTSD, removing the emotions surrounding the events. That's been it's own source of torture for the elf—being able to remember so much suffering, and being unable to feel empathy about is tearing them apart. You hope that your knowledge of their plight brings them some comfort—they deserve it for what they did to stop the demon.
- **Hanna (she/her):** Reporters, at least honest ones, are not common supplicants to Baru of Sayin. You've never met Hanna in your duties, or more than in passing.
- **Katy (she/her):** Katy has only divulged once to you (not surprisingly—Yojin are rare among most Baru's congregations). She told you about a fight where she intervened to help someone, only to find out that the party she threw out on the street may have been the wronged party. You investigated, and one mysterious whispers of a fake haunting later, the perpetrator apologized to all involved.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** Some people never divulge to you because they lack piety or shame—others never divulge because they are straightforwardly honest and without guile. You've talked a few times with Sebastin about Art, Sappir Village, or whatever's going on, and you're pretty certain he's the latter.
- **Isme (she/them):** You don't know if Isme has secrets in her personal life—but you suppose it's a sign of her professsionalism that every secret she's divulged to you is some complaint or concern about her work at Demar Apothecarium. Nothing has risen to the level of your intervention yet, but she has her suspicions about Shardrak Demar's involvement in the Lawjacks assault on Envoy Halish.

MAGIC · TECHNOLOGY · REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME IAREE

PRONOUNS	he/him
LINEAGE	Goblin
ORIGIN	Charuqian
BACKGROUND	Baru (Priest)
FORTUNE	CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL
CASTE	Lower Middle
DEBT	-

Keeper of Secrets

AGILITY	2
BRAWN	1
WIT	1
CHARISMA	2
AWARENESS	2
WILL	3

VALUES

IDEOLOGY — CONSECRATED
I will always see to better understand the wisdom of the gods and act according to their teachings.

VALUE — SWORN TO SECRECY
I will never reveal information passed on to me in confidence

VALUE — BURDEN OF KNOWLEDGE
When I am the only one with the knowledge necessary to enact justice, I will act

VALUE — TENDER OF THE FLOCK
I will always provide the guidance to those who ask and help those who seek to change to become better or atone

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
12	10	12	11	2	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /20 MAX	CURRENT /9 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL	(DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	0	2	0	3D6+2	D - R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	1	1	0	4D6+1	D - R 2
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	2	3	0	5D6+3	D - R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	0	2	0	3D6+2	D - R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	0	2	0	3D6+2	D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	1	2/1	0	4D6+2/1	D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R 2
TECH	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -

IMPULSES

NAME
Phobia: Demons

Despite your sacred training (or perhaps because of it), you have a fear of demonic spirits and their corruptive influence

TRIGGERS

* Encountering Demons
* Facing evidence of demons or an increased likelihood of dealing with them

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME
Precautions

You become consumed with studying Demons and preparing for the (terrifying) prospect of facing them. The first time you encounter demons in the next Act Phase, gain 3 Grit until the end of that scene.

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Elude Notice	pg 185	Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt. Make Magic Arts vs Vigilance of a target you lost concealment to to increase concealment by 2.
Forget	pg 185	Spell. Dissonance 1. Choose a target within 10m to erase up to 1 hrs of memories from. Tn = Aegis for unwilling targets, 8 for willing targets.
Unremarkable Face	pg 185	Spell. Dissonance 3. Create a glamour that obscures you and gives you resistance 2 against all losses of concealment. Drawing attention to yourself triggers a Magic Arts vs Vigilance check to avoid ending the spell
Hunter in the Dark	pg 186	Spell. Dissonance 1. Interrupt. Roll Magic vs aegis on attacked target within 100m to REduce Target's guard by 5
Breaking and entering	pg 152	Gain +1d6 on Observation and Physicality Tests against physical security
Inconspicuous	pg 153	For each point of Grit you spend, prevent up to 2 points of concealment loss
Prolific Pen Pal	pg 129	1/ Session, may gain +3 ona roll to know something.
Goblin Scamper	pg 84	Increase Agility to 2 (already calculated)
Scholarly Focus	pg 129	Gain Reliable 2 on two of Science and Humanities Tests

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
Churuqian

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Unshareable Knowledge

It has been confided in you that Kishar Eamar leaked the Lawjack Communications. This may be useful information, but you cannot share it. How can you make use of it? What other secret information have you been told?

Guide or Actor?

As a priest of the Baru Temple, Iaree has certain duties and obligations. How can he balance those with serving his community best?

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Temple of Sayin	Magic Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	Your congregation and responsibility
Glerre Sudryl	Humanities	Information (Sapir Village History) (pg 123)	4	15	Your closest friend and partial accomplice
Consecrated	Magic Arts	Information: Religion (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	The global network of Baru that you can lean on

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Personal Halo	pg 99	Standard Halo. Security Rating 10, Firewall 5
Knife (Mage Steel)	pg 108	1d6+1 Damage, AP5
Club (Crescent of Sayin)	pg 108	2d6+2 Damage. Innocuous Appearance.
Synthleather Clothing	pg 110	+2 Armor, Pattern Shift (+1 dice to Hide)
Micro-links	pg 106	20 miniature Camera/microphones, requires TN 15 Observation or tech to detect
Salve of life(x2)	pg 105	Heal 2d6 health, or spend 1 Grit to heal result of Magic Arts roll. Single use, expires next Downtime

KATY
The Protector

Katy is an Air Yojin, a practioner of sublime magic that enables her to move like air. While most Yojin's stereotypically engage in meditation as a practice in solitude, Katy expresses her being through art—dance, acrobatics, and the occassional fight choreography. Off the stage however, the Yettin Yojin is always a calming influence, and Katy is fiercely protective of her friends and community, and all too willing to crack some heads together until they realize that messing with those Katy protects is a bad idea.

ABILITIES

Like many Air Yojin, Katy is fast, able to bound through the air with ease. Katy is a practiced martial artist, and able to hold her own in a fight—able to give some solid punches while being tougher to land a blow on than most opponents would suspect from a "lumbering" Yettin.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Katy is devoted to protecting her friends and community. Katy's Values and hooks center around how to keep people safe—and how to carve out space for her own aspirations while doing so.

Background

Like many of the orphans who grew up at the Air Yojin monastery, you didn't know anything of your parents. The Yojin who raised you were universally kind, and while often stoic and focused on their own paths to enlightenment, they took care that you and the other children felt safe and protected.

You took to the studies well. Not all of the other children manifested sublime abilities, and those who didn't slowly peeled off to apprentice in other trades and pursue other walks of life. For a long while, you assumed you would walk in the path of many elder Yojin, living a life of meditation and duty.

All that changed when you encountered the Celestial Cirque. The Celestial Cirque are a peculiarity among the Air Yojin—a traveling troupe of acrobats who claim they meditate in art rather than in ritual. Watching them, you thought you understood the nature of air better than you had in thousands of meditations. Before you worked up the courage to ask about pursuing in their path though, they were gone, off on their unpredictable journey, traveling from town to monastery in whatever path they desired.

You asked the elder Yojin of your monastery about their path—while many professed skepticism of the path of the Celestial Cirque, they nonetheless allowed that there was some truth to meditation and art, and that each person's path was their own.

Sappir Village was not far from your monastery—thirty minutes taking the arterial commuter rails running into Neo Babylon, or an hour for an Air Yojin darting through the city and ignoring the traffic below. You quickly took to the performance spaces, admiring the art and stories, and taking whatever roles you could to be a part of it. At first the excitement of a Yojin led to gimmicky parts—fight choreographer for martial arts scenes, or an acrobatic act with nothing more complicated than impressive leaps above the stage. Soon though, you started learning the finer artistic parts of the craft—learning different styles of dance, and how to just not just move, but express yourself from moving. The path you intuited when you saw the Celestial Cirque started to click—that movement was an exploration and meditation as much as any of the meditative practices you had learned.

Your reputation as protector didn't take long to establish. Heading out with some friends for some kebab after a show, a belligerent drunk wasn't taking no for an answer from one of your friends. You gently guided them towards the door, when they got violent you took them out without them ever landing a blow. The next day, they came back with friends—you handled them all with ease, and made clear that if you saw any of them again doing anything other than acting with the utmost of politeness, you would make clear how little welcome they had remaining.

The proprietor, Sylvester Ory, took notice of your actions, and started giving you free Kebab, and occassionally dropping the names of some people who might be having trouble. Soon you didn't have to prove yourself but all but the most headstrong or intoxicated—a simple word and clearly articulated expectations were enough to make it clear that no one in Sappir Village could get away with hurting anyone else just by virtue of their toughness or strength. You took to the role immediately—making others feel safe was what your training and gifts as a Yojin were for.

Your life settled into a comfortable pattern, split between duties at the monastery, practicing and performing in and the various Sappir Arts Collective performances , and helping keep the peace in Sappir Village.

The pattern shattered when the Lawjacks killed Envoy Halkish. The people you prided yourself in making them feel safe, suddenly didn't, and your normal technique of walking up and muttering some encouraging threat about behaving themselves wasn't going to work on the Golden Masked thugs. When Lawmaster Finn was killed, things got worse as they swarmed the village. They dispersed the protestors, and rounded up the usual suspects, but you know the people they grabbed didn't do it. When the call for envoys came out, you were thrilled at the chance. People are killing people in your town—and you want the actual people who did it to stop.

Who You Know

RELATIONS

AIR YOJIN TEMPLE

Faction. Western Edge of Le Sanctuire

Your home for almost all your life, even as your life takes you into Sappir Village, you can always count on the Air Yojin Temple to be a refuge, a place to return to. It's where you practice your Sublime abilities, taking what you learn from life and figuring out how to make them part of who you are. As much as you yearn for more, you can't imagine life fully separated from the temple.

ENLIGHTENED

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

The enlightened movement is popular among the Yojin, and you are no exception. The focus on self-improvement lines up well with the focus of the Yojin, and you have found a group that helps you practice your martial arts, both as you aim to better master your own physicality, and also so you can keep protecting those important to you.

SAPPIR ARTS COLLECTIVE

Faction. North side of Sappir Village

Your love of art has embedded you in the Sappir Arts Collective, where you've joined a number of dance and theatrical performances. You're well liked, though you do worry that you're not taken seriously as an artist.

SYLVESTER ORY

Goblin. 72. He/him

Sylvester's gift of free kebab to you is part of his bigger role for Sappir Villlage—its most stalwart guardian. He does more with a kind smile and a warm meal, than you've ever done with a punch—including help you through some tough spots.

OTHER ENVOYS

- **Ashara (she/her):** You've seen Ashara around the Sappir Arts collective—you honestly found the mage a little intimidating in her confidence (especially knowing her family). She seems genuine though, and you have enough mutual friends that vouch for her.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** You look out for the new kids in town—someone tried to hastle Abi when he rolled in, and you shut that down. You spent the rest of the night chatting with him—he seems earnest and wants to make the world better. You believe he can.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** Could you punch a demon? You like to think you're a protector of the town, but you're not confident you could face what Dëaron did and win—which puts him high in your esteem. Watching him now, though, you're not so sure he won—even if Sappir Village did.
- **Hanna (she/her):** You'd never met Hanna when she asked you to follow her to meet up with some Valkyrie gangers for a story. You agreed, because that's what you do, and you were impressed at the calm she handled danger with, and you quickly hit it off as friends.
- **Iaree (he/him):** You had never met a Baru of Sayin before coming to Sappir Village—the Yojin tend to prefer their own counsel on spiritual matters. You tried divulgence once with him, sharing some concerns that perhaps you had misjudged the wrong party in a situation and hassled the victim. He thanked you for your secret, and that Sayin had a way of righting injustices. The next day, the person you saved apologized for lying to you, and that they had been in the wrong. You're not sure if it was divine intervention, or just common reflection, but you give Iaree credit either way.
- **Sebastin (he/him):** You overheard Orly say that you and Sebastin were the two best problem solvers in town—you for when something needed a bit of breaking, and Sebastin for when something needed a bit of fixing. You can't help but be a bit envious of the gutterwitches technical skills.
- **Isme (she/them):** Isme is the person you like the most that you have to punch at least once a month. She never wins, but she never shies away from a fight—and never begrudges losing fair and square, or admitting that she deserved it.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME KATY

PRONOUNS She/Her

LINEAGE Yettin

ORIGIN Babylonian

BACKGROUND Yojin Apprentice

FORTUNE CURRENT 325 / 325 TOTAL

CASTE Lower

DEBT -

AGILITY	BRAWN
3	3
WIT	**CHARISMA**
1	1
AWARENESS	**WILL**
1	1

The Protector

VALUES

IDEOLOGY ENLIGHTENED
I will always seek to better myself and aid others in becoming the best versions of their selves.

VALUE PROTECT THE VULNERABLE
I will always step in to stop harm from those who would use force to get their way.

VALUE ART IS FREEDOM
I will always support people's ability to make the art they want to make and express their values.

VALUE LOYAL TO MY FRIENDS
I will not allow bad things to happen to my friends and community.

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
15	10	10	12	6	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /24 MAX	CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /7 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL	(DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	1	1	0	4D6+1	D - R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	1	1	0	4D6+1	D - R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	1	1	0	4D6+1	D - R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	1	3	0	4D6+3	D - R 2
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	2	3	0	5D6+3	D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	-	3	0	3D6+3	D 4 R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
TECH	(WIT)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -

IMPULSES

NAME

Indulgence: Sacred Blue Addiction

like many Yojin seeking a little help in transcending their mortal constraints, you rely a bit too much on the dissociative high from Sacred Blue to help you relax and meditate

TRIGGERS

* Someone offering you Sacred Blue
* Stressful situations
* Being bored or trying to meditate

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

Partake

You spend hours deep in a trance, meditating on the universe under the affect of sacred blue and ignoring the rest of the world. Spend 1 Fortune, recover 3 Grit, and the GM gains 5 Grit.

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Air Yojin	pg 191	May have up to 2 meditations active at once.
light Body	pg 192	Meditation. Gain +1d6 on all Physicality Tests related to movement. When you take Major Move, you gain acceleration 3. Take no damage from falling.
Eye of the Hurricane	pg 192	Meditation. You gain +5 Adamant and +3 on all defenses any turn you take no actions besides move. When you do so, you may spend 1 Grit as an interrupt to replace your guard with the results of a Magic Arts Test.
Flickering Meditation	pg 191	You may spend a backup action to gain the effects of a meditation until the end of your next turn
Supernatural Leaps	pg 192	Meditation. You may use Magic Arts in lieu of Physicality for Tests related to moving quickly. When moving, you may move in a straight line ignoring terrain, as long as you end your turn on solid ground.
Float like a butterfly	pg 192	Meditation. Gain +2 Guard. As an Interrupt Action, you may spend 1 Grit to increase your physical Armor by 3 for one attack.
Martial Arts	pg 138	Your unarmed attacks do 2d6 instead of 1d6
Yeti Features	pg 86	Gain +1 Armor (Already Calculated) . You gain Reliable 3 for all Physicality Tests in below freezing temperatures, but gain 1 instance of Dulled for all temperatures above 40°C (100°F)
School of Hard Knocks	pg 128	gain +1 Guard (Already calculated) and Reliable 2 on all Melee Combat Tests.

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
Altaipheran

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Defender

You have a reputation as someone who stops trouble. This earns you lots of friends, but pulls you into a lot of conflicts where you have to figure out who's right—and sometimes it puts a big target on your back.

Putting the art in martial arts

you express yourself through movement—be it as an acrobat, stage choreographer, or martial arts performances. You're determined to prove to others (and yourself) that what you do is art worth appreciating—even as others expect you to be a glorified bouncer.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Enlightened	Melee combat	Teacher (Brawler) (pg 123)	5	3	You believe in getting better at stuff. other enlightened help you Do so!
Sylvester Ory	Arts	Care (pg 122)	4	15	Free kabob for helping the town. Also advice when you need it
Air Yojin Temple	Magic Arts	Teacher (Way of air) (pg 123)	4	5	Your home and center of your magical practice and beliefs
Sappir Arts Collective	Arts	Teacher (Artist) (pg 123)	3	5	Where you learn about art!

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Paylo	pg 99	Cheap halo, easy to hack and full of obnoxious adware. Security Rating 7, Firewall 0
Armored Clothing	pg 110	Clothing designed for the everyday wear for those who expect trouble. Tn 13 Observation Test to notice as Armored
Sacred Blue (3 doses)	pg 104	A drug, commonly consumed as a tea, that induces a dissociative high. Gain Adamant 10 but Dulled on all Tests while under its effects.

SEBASTIN

The Problem Solver

Sebastin, as part of Sappir Works, helps make sure everything runs in Sappir Village. Sebastin cobbles everything together with a mix of immense technical know-how, a brain for creative problem solving, and a knack for kinetic magic.

ABILITIES

Sebastin is an expert at fixing things and knowing about science. As a kinetic mage, he also has the ability to levitate objects, create dangerous whips of water, and protect himself and others from physical attacks.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Sebastin is tired of dealing with other people's problems—because he's constitutionally incapable of looking at a problem and not trying to fix it. Sebastin's hooks and Values center around his unwavering sense of responsibility—and trying to get things in a state where it doesn't always fall to him to fix it.

BACKGROUND

Gutter Witch.

Some people say that like it's supposed to be an insult. Like a reasonable person should be ashamed of being associated with the greatest invention in history, the source of civilization—sanitation.

So when people ask what college I studied at, and I tell them I'm self taught, and they make some surprised remark about being a gutter which, I tell them I am—in fact I work for Sappir Works and that my responsibilities include making sure the storm drains are clear, the power is on, and no one can smell their poop.

You know, civilization!

At this point gutter witch has been a friendly joke among most people in Sappir Village. Everyone forgets about infrastructure until it's a problem, and when it does, that's when you (or your other colleagues at Sappir works), come to visit.

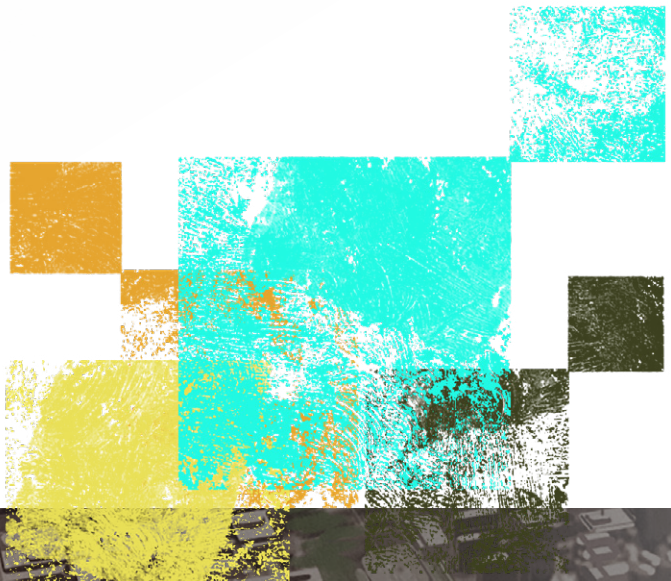
You never got the mysticism around arcane magic—just like technology it's all about energy. You've done your reading about magic, but honestly you learned about how to use magic in a physics textbook. Being able to apply force arbitrarily and make things temporarily weightless is useful for trying to fix something, be it unclog a pipe or temporarily lighten a load while you rebuild a weight-bearing wall. Your magic makes you a better civil engineer—but that's the useful part of what you do. Magic's just a tool, albeit one that not everyone gets to use.

When problems show up, you fix them. You're mostly grateful that people know to come to you when something needs fixing—you hate for problems to fester. The only problem is, people keep trying to expand your responsibilities. You've been approached to be an envoy every year for the last nine years—each time you've said no. You don't have a magic people wrench, and your plate is full enough keeping Sappir Village running. You get enough politics trying to balance the budget of Sappir Works—negotiating levees from residents, or drumming up contributions from the big corporations. You're in the good graces of the corporations now, ever since a year or two back the residents exempted all the low-caste people from paying the infrastructure levee. You're not unsympathetic to the idea—but it means that now your work is primarily funded by the corps, which means you've agreed to do more spec work prioritizing what they need.

The recent riots and death of the Lawmaster led you finally to relent to calls to be an Envoy—you were afraid the town would literally tear itself apart, or failing that get bombed by Lawjack VTOLs if things got any worse.

That would be more work for you. Hopefully the rest of the envoys fixing this keep a level head on their shoulders and you can all get out of this in a reasonable timeframe and get back to the important things in life.

Like not smelling like poop. All hail the gutter witches!



Who You Know

Relations

Sappir Works

Faction. Center of Sappir Village (Offices)

Technically Sappir Works is run by Dir Nannar, a smooth talking goblin who manages the finances (and thankfully), the worst of the politics. When it comes to actually fixing things, you (as well as a few apprentices and part time contractors) are the main show. Sappir Works is responsible for maintaining all the roads, sidewalks, power, water, sewage, and data infrastructure for Sappir Village—which despite your best efforts, are constantly needing some repair or upgrade.

Technologists

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

Despite your magical talents, you believe full heartedly in the primacy of technology—a cybertech future where everyone has all their needs met with only a minimal time investment from a handful of civil engineers is possible—and far better than any world that magic could produce. You're constantly trawling Technologist Message Groups for new techniques or blueprints to make things better, and often call on your connections for help with issues.

Gierre Sudryl

Elf. 64. She/her

You're pretty certain Gierre is the only person who knows more about Sappir Village than you do, and despite your efforts to get all the blueprints into your own database, somehow there's always an extra copy that she has and you don't. You'd almost swear it's deliberate, but to be fair, you don't mind—she's also the only person in Sappir Village who doesn't mind talking about construction techniques from 100 years ago or figuring out who laid the original foundations for an old building.

Other Envoys

- **Ashara (she/her):** The first time you met Ashara, she tried to talk shop with you, showing off her detailed knowledge of magical theory. You think she realized she came off like an ass, because ever since then she's been trying to get you to teach her force magic. She seems genuine enough, but you don't have time to teach magic just to smooth over a social faux-pas—especially someone with the Demar family namewho could afford better teaching in a style they're used to if she wanted to.
- **Abimaras (he/him):** You have an appreciation for most Aiders—while you focus on buildings and not people, ultimately making sure everything works and nothing falls by the wayside is both of your jobs. His wheelchair needed fixing at some point, and you were more than happy to do so, and he struck you as honest and idealistic folk.
- **Dëaron (they/them):** You led the team that cleaned the blood from the murders of the Sorrow Massacre—you can't imagine being there for the deaths themselves. You're glad that that, at least, wasn't your problem to handle—and grateful that Dëaron handled it.
- **Hanna (she/her):** Normally you'd be annoyed if someone bugged you for maintenance diagnostics or tried to pull up the cameras you use to make sure things are working right. But Hanna might just be the best person you know when it comes to software and autonomous systems, and the fact she's always willing to help out when you have a problem in cyberspace gives her all the sensor feeds she needs to do her journalism job.
- **Iaree (he/him):** You don't have anything against the Baru, though you do find the Baru of Sayin a bit strange, keeping to themselves, flitting across the city at all hours of the night doing who knows what. It's why you like working with things—they don't keep secrets—at least not the sort of secrets the Baru care about.
- **Katy (she/her):** You used to have a vandalism problem in Sappir Village—not that you have a thing against street art, but not every piece of machinery appreciates being a canvas. Katy has reduced the problems with many of the less civic minded members of the community, making your job a lot easier. Top marks in your books.
- **Isme (she/them):** Speaking of less civic minded miscreants, that's how you met Isme, crashing a bike she'd converted into a drone into a transformer, taking out the power for a full block. To her credit though, she hung around to fix it—and actually knows her way around a wrench. Since then, she swings by often to talk shop, and you'll frequently help each other out on projects when she needs some help with drones or you need some help with some machinery. You wouldn't admit it, but sometimes you think she might actually be better than you at fixing things.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME SEBASTIN

PRONOUNS	He/Him
LINEAGE	Dwarf
ORIGIN	Chaldani
BACKGROUND	Gutter witch
FORTUNE	CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL
CASTE	Lower Middle
DEBT	-

AGILITY	1
BRAWN	1
WIT	3
CHARISMA	1
AWARENESS	2
WILL	3

The PRoblem Solver

VALUES

IDEOLOGY TECHNOLOGIST

I will always seek to provide people with the technology they need to survive and thrive.

VALUE WORK HARD PLAY HARD

I will never shirk my duties, and I will Never give up the chance to do something fun when I don't have other responsibilities.

VALUE RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

I will always act responsibly and due what's expected of me and not cause problems for other.

VALUE CLEANLINESS AND ORDER

I will always leave things in a better state than I found them, and never cause a mess that I don't clean up (literally or Metaphorically).

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
10	14	12	10	0	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /16 MAX	CURRENT /9 MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL	(DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	1	1	0	4D6+1	D - R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	1	3	0	4D6+3	D - R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	0	2	0	3D6+2	D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	0	1	0	3D6+1	D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	-	2	0	3D6+2	D 4 R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
TECH	(WIT)	2	3	0	5D6+3	D - R -

IMPULSES

NAME

Pride

Sebastin has a very high opinion of his work and his value to the community.

TRIGGERS

* Criticisms or destruction of his work
* Someone altering his work without consulting him
* Someone not acknowledging when he helped them

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

Trouble

Gain 2 Grit and PC and GM each choose 1: take 5 irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose 1 fortune, break 1 piece of gear, decrease Base Regard of a Relation by 1.

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Toxin Resistant	pg 84	Gain +4 Guard when resisting toxins
The Sea Calls	pg 128	Gain +1d6 on Physicality Tests to swim and Piloting checks on the water
Arcane Caster	pg 62	May harmonize as a Main Action to accumulate 1 Force bar each turn, up to a maximum of 2 force bars.
Absorbing Ditty	pg 165	Spell. Sustainable. Gain 3 Physical Armor until the end of the next Round. AmP: Each force bar adDs +3 Armor
Force Field	pg 165	Spell. 1 force bar. Sustainable. All individuals within 10m gain +4 physical Armor.AMP: Add 1 force bar for +3 Armor. Amp: Add 1 force bar to select which targets gain the Armor.
Delicate Touch	pg 165	Ditty. Manipulate object lighter than 5 kg withing 50m. make Magic Arts vs Aegis to grab attended object.
Kinetic Whip	pg 166	Spell. 1 force bar. Sustainable. Gain +2 Guard, when casting or sustaining may attack target in t range with Magic Arts for 2d6 damage. Amp: 1 force bar –>1d6 damage. Amp: 1 force bar–> Increase guard by 2
Levitate	pg 166	spell. Sustainable. Touched target less than 200kg becomes weightless. Amp: 1 force bar when casting or sustaining you may move the target 10m. Amp: 1 force bar, you may affect a group of objects or targets up to 500kg
Infrastructure Specialist	pg 150	When you make a community resource as a Downtime project, you pay 1/5 the cost instead of half.

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

Common–Ur
Chaldani

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Keep it working

You take your job helping keep the infrastructure of Sappir Village working for everyone seriously, and you're on call day and night in case things go wrong. Exploded sewage mains wait for no one!

Curse of the competent

You have a reputation for being good at fixing problems—not just technical problems but any situation where a level head and systematic approach could fix. Of course, this means you get asked to fix everything from leaking rooves to misbehaving teenagers—and despite your best efforts, you can't say no.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	4	5	A town of artists you can ask for help
Sappir works	Tech	Clout (Faction) (pg 122)	4	9	Your job, where you make things work
Gierre Sudryl	Humanities	Information (Sappir Village History) (pg 123)	4	11	Town archivist, where you go to find out new things about Sappir VIllage
Technologists	Tech	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	The network of people who believe in a better world through tech

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Personal Halo	pg 99	Standard Halo. Security Rating 10, Firewall 5
Catalog of things	pg 101	Gain Reliable 3 on allHumanities rolls to identify objects
Reference Library	pg 101	Gain +1d6 onHumanities and Science rolls when you have time to consult. Gain an additional +1d6 on rolls related to architecture

ISME ZANA

Move Fast and Break Things

Isme is a talented jumper—controlling drones and vehicles via cybernetic datajacks, as well as fixing and modifying them herself. This skillset earned her a well-paying position running security for Demar Apothecarium, where her drones let her keep an eye on potential trouble, and her tasers let her deal with any trouble she gets to before the Lawjacks. Isme's also a talented mechanic, able to fix or modify most things. Always happy for confrontation, Isme is always up for an argument or a fight if the other person deserves it.

ABILITIES

Isme can pilot her three flying drones better than anyone else in Sappir Village, and is practiced at pulling in sensor feeds from them to keep an eye on potential problems. Her truck carries everything she needs to fix stuff when it gets broken. Isme is no stranger to a brawl, and between her armed drones and talons can deal with most trouble.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Isme never shies from confrontation, and is happy to go toe-to-toe with anyone brave enough to challenge her. Isme's hooks and Values center on the contradictions between her love of building stuff, her willingness to tear down stuff that needs rebuilding, her readiness to jump into trouble, and her professional job for one of the oldest establishments in Sappir Village.

Background

Your brood emigrated to Neo Babylon when you were eight—old enough to remember what it was like living in the old cliffside fishing village your brood had lived in for generations, but young enough to adopt the new life with gusto. While some of your older aunts and siblings struggled with the city, you fit in fast.

Well, to say you fit in was a stretch. You found Neo Babylon society just as weird as the rest of your family—the weird rules of who was allowed to do what (determined by money, magic, and most bafflyingly coming from a place without it, gender). You survived by not bending and holding your own. You got into lots of fights and arguments, but you got good enough to hold your own, and soon people stopped trying to apply stupid rules to you.

If people weren't quite your forté, things were. You started working at an old junkyard, tweaking drones and fixing vehicles and selling them for stanz on the side. It was never any real money—but it was enough to make a living and help out your family. You eventually moved up the ladder, getting a solid job at a repair shop.

Say what you will about Shardrak Demar, but he has an eye for talent. Shardrak was negotiating repairs on his car, the proprietor apologizing about how long it would take. You didn't think it'd take nearly that long, and your face said so. Shardrak asked how long it would take you to fix the car—when you said an hour, he told you to do it, over the bumbling excuses of your boss. When you did it, he offered you a job on the spot.

Working for the Demar's has its benefits—chiefly among them money. The Demar Apothecarium covered the cost of your cybersurgery to get a datajack, and soon you weren't just fixing up drones, but flying them, racing through the streets and skies in you free time, and patrolling the factory and Demar estate when on the clock. Shardrak always paid you well—enough to live comfortably, and enough to let you build and tinker with what you wanted to on the free time. While the name of the business was in compounds carefully concocted through elaborate alchemical magic, Shardrak embraced the mass produced chemical processes with gusto, and welcomed technically minded subordinates with ease—and as much as he exuded upper class stuffiness, he never minded your straightforwardness, and as long as you kept your brawls and arguments off the clock, they weren't an issue with your employment. On the contrary, you slowly took on more responsibility—helping keep the production lines working, as well as acting as the family's personal driver and security coordinator, handling situations needing something more discreet than the lawjacks. You get to build stuff, play with cool toys, and keep making new stuff that works better—all in all it's a good gig.

You were off duty the night of the break-in at Demar Aphothecarium—your drones picked up the break-in but the Lawjacks on duty assumed it was a false alarm (as if), and the thieves got in and out with thousands of fortune worth of pharmaceuticals. You were there for the aftermath. You'd never seen Shardrak Demar so coldly furious at the Lawjacks, never raising his voice, but making it entirely clear that such lawlessness could not stand in Sappir Village. Lawmaster Finn was apologetic, and made clear that they would send a message to the theives.

You weren't surprised when you heard the thief had been killed in the arrest—though you were surprised that it was an Aider Envoy. The protests put everyone on edge—Lawjack security everywhere surged, and your drones were on high alert for trouble. When Lawmaster Finn was killed, things got even worse.

A lot of people wouldn't have trusted Shardrak's personal security as an envoy—but your reputation for never shying from facing a conflict head on got you the nod. That's the approach you plan on taking at least—if there's a problem, the parties involved should have it out, toss out what's not working, and figure out how to build something better. That's your philosophy for tech, and it's not far from your philosophy for life, too.

Who You Know

Relations

Demar Apothecarium

Faction. East of Sappir Village (Demar Estate)

You've worked for Demar Apothecarium for almost 15 years now, helping with both the industrial production as well as driving the Demar family and helping run security. It's a good gig, and it gives you what you need to fulfill your hobbies.

Technologists

Ideological Movement (Faction). Global

You believe in building stuff, seeing how it works, running it until it breaks, and building something better. You don't just believe that for drones—you think that's what progress looks like for society. There are a number of like-minded individuals in the Technologists, and you're happy to geek and collaborate with them on their projects and yours.

Other Envoys

- **Ashara aka "Miss Demar" (she/her):** For all that Ashara Demar likes to play at Neo Anarchist, you've worked for her family for years, and you saw her grow up, ignoring you like she ignored all the other of her families employees. You saw her bratty teenage tantrums, you told her mother about the times she snuck out (though you kept it from her Dad). The Demars paid the bills, so she gets a polite name, much to her dismay whenever she's trying to not be the fish out of water. But you can take the mage out of the elite, but you can't take the elitism out of the mage—for all of her high ideas, she's still convinced that with her privileges she can make the world a better place. Frag off.
- **Abimaras aka "New Guy" (he/him):** That guy can drink. The first night you ran into him (the night of the break-in at the Apothecarium—you remember because you had to deal with the fallout with a splitting hangover), you struck up a conversation, and ended up polishing off 3 bottles of whiskey. You got wasted and ended up puking together in an ally. Dealing with the fallout was a pain, but it was your night off, you had fun, and Abi's pretty cool in your book.
- **Dëaron aka "Broody McDemonslayer" (they/them):** You don't actually call them Broody McDemonslayer to their face—you, like so many others just give them a vague nod of acknowledgement, that they sometimes respond to. You guess they've earned the right to be mopey, as long as you don't have to pretend that everything touching them is solemnly important.
- **Hanna aka "Miss Statement": (she/her):** You underestimated Hanna the first time you met. She was bugging you to make a statement about the latest security arrangement between the Lawjacks and Demar Apothecarium, and you told her to take her statements and stuff them up her ass, sending Zappy to buzz menacingly by her. To your surprise, she tapped a few things in AR, and Zappy buzzed over to her side, taser aimed at you. That took balls—you gave her your statement and sense then chat with her all the time about the newest software and control systems. She knows her tech as well as she knows the latest news in town, and for that you respect her, and now you're pretty good friends.
- **Iaree aka "Mums" (he/him):** You're professional enough that you don't talk about what you see on drone cameras from your day job. Luckily, it's well accepted that you can blab all you want to the Baru of Sayin, so all the shady suspicions you have about the Demars and their role in bribing off the Lawjacks for Halkish's murder—Iaree gets to be the recipient of that. He doesn't say anything about it—that's why he gets his name!
- **Katy aka Katy (she/her):** You don't mind getting into fights. You know when Katy steps in that you've gotten into a fight for a dumb reason (yeah, you know, it happens some time). But that's respect, and that's why she gets to get called by her actual name.
- **Sebastin aka "Magic Fixy Dude" (he/him):** Magic Fixy Dude is a term of endearment for one of your best friends. Despite magic being an utter cesspool of elitist pricks, Sebastin gets a pass—maybe because he's a gutter witch and missed the mandatory elitism seminar, but mostly just because he's the only person (almost) as good at tinkering and fixing things as you are.

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME ISHME

Move Fast and Break THings

PRONOUNS	She/Them
LINEAGE	Harmaku
ORIGIN	Babylonian
BACKGROUND	Artist
FORTUNE	CURRENT 320 / 320 TOTAL
CASTE	Lower Middle
DEBT	None

AGILITY	2
BRAWN	1
WIT	3
CHARISMA	0
AWARENESS	3
WILL	1

VALUES

IDEOLOGY — TECHNOLOGIST

I will always seek to provide people with the technology they need to survive and thrive.

VALUE — NO SUNK COSTS

I will always do what makes the most sense now and don't get distracted by the status quo or what I've invested before.

VALUE — CONFLICT REVEALS PROBLEMS

I will never shy away from confronting a problem or something I think could be done better, and I will always welcome criticism and arguments.

VALUE — BUILD SOMETHING BETTER

everything can always be improved, and I will always work to replace things with an improved version.

DEFENSE

GUARD	VIGILANCE	AEGIS	INITIATIVE	ARMOR	ADAMANT
12	14	14	15	0	0

CONDITION

HEALTH	ANIMITY	GRIT
CURRENT / MAX	CURRENT / MAX	CURRENT / MAX
/16	/12	/7

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL	(DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)	-	0	0	3D6	D 4 R -
DECEPTION	(CHA)	-	0	0	3D6	D 4 R -
HUMANITES	(WIT)	-	3	0	3D6+3	D 4 R -
INFLUENCE	(CHA)	-	0	0	3D6	D 4 R -
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)	-	1	0	3D6+1	D 4 R -
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)	2	1	0	5D6+1	D - R -
OBSERVATION	(AWA)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)	0	2/1	0	3D6+2/1	D - R -
PILOTING	(AWA)	1	3	0	4D6+3	D - R -
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
SCIENCE	(WIT)	0	3	0	3D6+3	D - R -
TECH	(WIT)	2	3	0	5D6+3	D - R -

IMPULSES

NAME

Impetuous

You are full of Good intentions, but your enthusiasm often outruns your willingness to think Things through.

TRIGGERS

* Coming up with a plan that sounds good (But Isn't)
* Encountering a problem you never had to deal with
* Making a Snap decision on How to treat someone

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

Trouble

Gain 2 Grit and PC and GM each choose 1: take 5 irresistible Health damage, take 5 irresistible Animity damage, lose 1 fortune, break 1 piece of gear, decrease Base Regard of a Relation by 1.

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT
Basic Datajack	pg 157	Gain Reliable 2 on all Tests with Halo or other gear you're directly connected to
Remote Monitor	pg 156	Gain Reliable 3 on all Observation Tests from remote sensors or drones
Made for speed	pg 157	When you take the Major Move action to go faster than a vehicles top Speed, it can maintain it longer. You gain Augment 1 on all chase rolls going above top Speed
Defensive Posture	pg 156	Drones and vehicles you control gain +2 guard, and the pursuit track to catch you is increased by 5
Special Modifications	pg 150	Gain extra enhancements on things you build or modify yourself
Adaptable Bearing	pg 128	1/session, gain +1d6 on a roll of your choice
Deadly Talons	pg 85	You may use your talons to do 2d6+1 damage, AP 1 as a melee attack
Quick Reflexes	pg 156	When controlling a drone or vehicle, gain +2 Initiative, and reduce Grit cost to act in Surprise Round by 1.

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

CommonUr
NobleUr

DRAMATIC HOOKS

Build for who?

Your desire to play with drones and vehicles means you want a lot of Fortune. Jumping pays well, but are the jobs you're taking for money always consistent with how you want to change the world?

Hey you, Asshole!

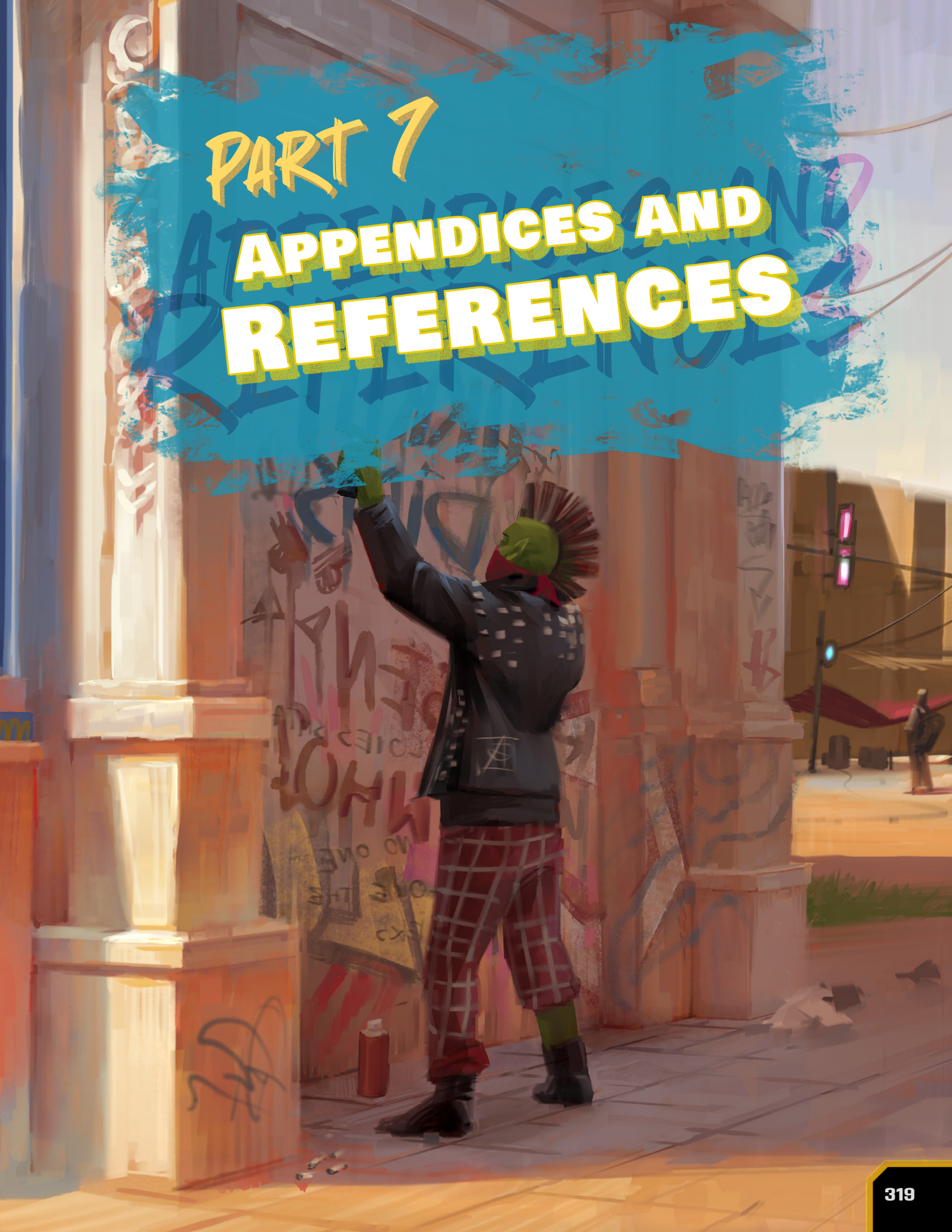
You don't tolerate idiots, and get in a lot of fights. Most bars and other congregations of obnoxious twats have a handful of people you've gotten in a fight with—who might be looking for payback.

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES
Sappir Village	Arts	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	5	4	A town of artists you can ask for help
Technologists	Tech	Service (Faction) (pg 123)	5	5	People who believe that tech is awesome and makes the world cooler
Demar Apothecarium	Magic Arts	Swag: Pharmaceuticals (pg 123)	4	6	Your employer. Slightly stuffy, but they pay the bills

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION
Personal Halo	pg 99	Standard Halo. Security Rating 10, Firewall 5
Auto-Intruder	pg 105	Gain Reliable 3 on Physicality or Tech rolls to bypass locks or other similar security if character can physically touch them with the auto-intruder
"Peeps" (Aerial Drone)	pg 118	Speed 6, Health 6. +1d6 on Observation Tests and stealth Tests with this Drone
"Zippy" (Aerial Drone)	pg 118	Speed 7, Health 6, AI 4, Acceleration 3, IC
"Zappy" (Aerial Drone)	pg 118	Speed 6, Health 6, Armor 3, AI 4, Acceleration 2. Weapon Mount: Taser (2d6 damage, 50m range)
Truck (Leased, 2 Fortune/month)	pg 116	Speed 5, Size 6, 7s, 15c, Health 50, AI 1. MIT: Repair Shop (Augment 5 to build or Repair)



Part 7
Appendices and References

Lexicon of Neo Babylon

Abru: 1) A person in one's group of friends. An acquaintance.

Abrus: 1) One's primary group of relations. Ex: "Me and Tam are hanging with our abrus today. It's our weekly game night."

Amortals: 1) Beings which are not biologically alive, and so cannot technically die. Examples include demons, and if cyberscientists are correct, any future artificial intelligences which may emerge.

Arcanist: 1) When used as a particular group of people, Arcanists refer to the Ukkim and their government. 2) When used as as general term, arcanist refers to proponents of government rule by those with the strongest or most effective magic. The most common form sees arcane magic as superior to sublime and sacred mag.

Arcanism: 1) A bias in favor of those with magical ability. 2) A bias in favor of arcane magic over sacred and sublime magic. Most commonly yoked with the general bias in favor of magic over mundane.

Banch: 1) To complain 2) profane, aggressive term for a disliked person 3) a grunt or follower

Baru (plural baru): 1) A priest of the official religion of Neo Babylon. 2) Multiple baru priests, or the collective religious order of Neo Babylon. 3) The official religion of Neo Babylon, often referred to also as 'the Baru religion' or "Babylonian religion."

Bistar: 1) Someone without honor 2) profane insult

Boarc: 1) Derogatory name for orcs, recalling their often pig-like features, specifically tusks and the uncommon porcine snout.

Boreborn: 1) A derogatory name for humans, implying their culture and/or nature is bland and unworthy of propagating.

Bravia: 1) Worldwide crime syndicate, most powerful in Erebu, but also strong in Neo Babylon. It has roots in Iberian nationalism and most of of its senior leaders are connected to the dwarven and/or Iberian founding families.

Breacher: 1) Someone who subverts computer security, specifically "breaching" cybertech firewalls. 2) Any person who subverts any kind of electronic security.

Caster: 1) Someone who has the ability to use, or "cast," magic. This includes chosen who use sacred magic, mags who wield arcane magic, and yojin who perform sublime feats.

Cat's Eye: 1) A phrase used to indicate a person can see into the shine more clearly. If someone notices a spirit or demon when others don't, they might say, "oh, she has the cat's eye."

Chosen: 1) A caster who is granted the ability to wield magic from a higher power or otherworldly being. The conditions or reasons that some are granted this ability while others are not, which is why being "chosen" remains as mysterious and unsearchable as the powers themselves.

Clink:1) Cyber-Link, cyberlinks, C-Link. Cybertech-powered vending machines of Neo Babylon. Rather than store inventory on hand, corps place small microfabrication plants inside each C-link that can produce almost anything out of plastic, wires, and standardized motors, springs, and other components.

Crypt: 1) Street Drug. Niche and expensive, but always in demand. It induces mild hallucinations, and some claim that the visuals and voices associated with it are the dead speaking from beyond the grave, although this effect remains fringe and unconfirmed.

Cyberkit: 1) A tool used in breaching and cybertech manipulation. Each breacher has their own, cobbled from what they've scavenged or bought, interacting with headware in various ways. No two have the same form or even functions. Also called breach kits, breacher kits, breacher rigs, cyber rigs, cyboards, brain boards, tech decks, etc.

Cybertech: 1) A catch-all term for the recent, and meteoric, advances which extended and expanded the computing power of technological devices by leaps and bounds, has made a profound impact on the modern world. Cybertech pervades almost every element of modern life.

Dim: 1) Generic slang for an unliked person 2) Ironic name for a friend. Often used in the phrase "my dim(s)." 3) Archaic word for a fashionable person.

Ek: 1) Short for Ekku, child born and raised in a Baru temple

Envoy: 1) Appointed or elected figureheads that represent groups of Neo Babylonian citizens to the Ukkim. They are given a measure of freedom to act on behalf of their communities, advocate for them to governmental entities, and are legally allowed to represent communities legally, and carry out enforcement within their own communities. 2) Loose term to recognize any appointed representatives of any group of people.

Fleabag: 1) Extremely offensive and derogatory name for furred Yettin.

Flow: 1) The most common street drug among corpos and upper class. Induces a hyper-focused state, enabling the user to focus on a task to the exclusion of any distractions such as food, rest, or bodily functions.

Frag, Fragging, Fragged: 1) Common profanity 2) To have sex 3) To kill or murder. Syn. Fug

Freebooter: 1) Outlaws for hire. Most of the time, they work on behalf of their communities, families, or other organizations, engaging in quasi-legal schemes and missions that are too dangerous or otherwise distasteful for envoys or the community at large.

Fug, Fugging, Fugged: 1) Common profanity 2) To have sex 3) To pummel or beat. Syn. Frag

God Tears: 1) Uncommon street drug. Originally part of the sacred practice of some Northern Yettin, God Tears come from a rare mushroom traditionally dissolved in sea water. When applied directly onto eyes, God Tears pull back the veil of the shine and give the user shinesight for the duration of the high.

Good silver: 1) One's own genitals

Gutterwitch: 1) Arcane casters, who, by choice or lack of opportunity, develop their magical abilities independently, working off of scraps of lore they can scrounge and their own experimentation. 2) Offensive term for mages who are of lesser skill or to suggest they are poor practitioners.

Half-Elf: 1) An elf raised in a non-elvish home. 2) An elf that is a part of a non-fae or particularly non-elven or pluralistic culture. 3) An insult to elves implying they are not "elven" enough.

H-ID: 1) Pronounced 'High-D.' Halo Identification Number. Every person within Neo Babylonian influence receives one of these at birth to protect and confirm their identity. Later, they are used to connect and identify and confirm one's Halo and connected devices.

Immortals: 1) Living beings who cannot die. Examples include spirits, gods, and if they exist beyond rumor, vampires, liches, and naspar.

Ishtar's Secret, Ishtar's: 1) Someone else's genitals ("their Ishtars," "caught a peek at Ishtar's secret")

Jumper: 1) Experts at using cybertech to remotely operate drones and vehicles. 2) Anyone who "jumps" into a drone or vehicle to operate it in "first person" mode.

Kark: 1) Slang for "karkitt," non-religious or freelance sex worker

Kash: 1) A brandy-like alcohol made from quince fruit. Often infused with rose petals, giving it a light pink hue.

Khayin: 1) Former yojin who have left the authorized teaching behind and no longer hold to yojin strictures. 2) Sublime casters who don't fit into the traditional (yojin) models of sublime magic and are looked down on by others as rogue, misfits, or not worthy of respect.

Khora: 1) Friend

King Mud: 1) Street drug. Brown and viscous. Amps physical performance.

Kint: 1) Common profanity 2) Genitalia 3) Familiar (still profane) term for friend or random person

Ks and Qs: 1) Karks and Quads (see Kark, Quad)

Lawjack: 1) The literal and metaphoric faceless mask of the brutal Neo Babylonian "justice" system. They are the police paid to stamp down crime, catch criminals and subversives, and generally uphold the status quo for the noble, powerful, and wealthy.

Lineage: 1) The particular biological line from which sapient species can trace their origins. 2) One of the Seven Lines of Kingu

Mage: 1) An arcane who uses strict training in accepted mana theory to produce repeatable magic phenomenon. 2) Any student or alumni of any official Neo Babylonian college of Magic.

Mithus Magi: 1) A magical duel. Mostly archaic, but still used among arcanist nobles and as disciplinary actions against those who violate official magic policy. Particularly enforced among colleges of magic for dire trespasses.

Noddy: 1) Slang for naditu. A vestal priest or priestess of Shamash who has taken a vow of celibacy in order to more fully give themselves to the sun god. Naditu may marry and have romantic relationships, but are committed to keeping themselves sexually chaste.

Nonchalance: 1) An uncommon street drug originally developed as a treatment for post traumatic stress disorder, nonchalance removes the user's emotional connection to recent memories while keeping the memories intact.

Old Siren: 1) A betel nut-flavored spirit said by some to induce hallucinations.

Pally: 1) Paladin 2) A person with cybertech enhancements 3) A local hero, often with cybertech enhancements

Person/Personkind: 1) A grouping that includes all sapient beings with recognizable agency, wants and desires. Persons include lineages/the seven lines of Kingu, but also any creatures capable of sapience, agency, wants, and desires, such as centaurs, satyrs, minotaurs, kadru (wildfolk), lahmukin (water folk), akshu (earth folk), and erenu (tree folk).

Powers: 1) The gods. 2) Generic term for the forces of the universe, seen and unseen, whatever they may be. Is increasingly in favor in academic circles.

Rabbit: 1) Derogatory name for elves, suggestive of their habitat and cuisine.

Radroof: 1) The Undercity Skyfloor. The structure between the Undercity and the Overcity. Emits simulated solar radiation.

Remembrance: 1) A street drug that acts as a memory enhancer, or, if a memory is not recoverable, acts as a memory-creation drug, making it both useful and dangerous in equal measure.

Quad: 1) Slang for "qadiss." Priests at Baru temples authorized to receive divine worship and provide sacred rites via sexual activity. Female, male, and non-binary priests are common, but nearly all are devoted to the goddess Ishtar.

Sacred Blue: 1) A street drug made from blue lotus. It is most often smoked or made into tea. Induces a calming, dream-like high.

Scraper: 1) Derogatory name for Dwarves, suggesting that their beards, knuckles, and other parts scrape along the ground when they walk.

Shine: 1) Properly, Shinitu, the world of spirits and other ethereal beings. Some have called it the ethereal or the Aether (the root of which means, "shine"). Those who have pierced the veil and perceived Shinitu say it shares the same space as what we normally see, but is full of luminous, or "shiny," beings and things, thus many began to call it the Shining sight, or just The Shining, and eventually, just The Shine.

Shinesight: 1) The ability to see into the Shine. Some have the ability to see into the shine sometimes, or often, at various levels of intensity, but casters are much more at home seeing the Shine more easily.

Shet, Shetting, Shat: 1) Common profanity 2) To defecate

Stans/Stanz: 1) The silver standard shekel. The authorized and acceptable currency of Neo Babylon. 2) Money 3) Payment

Street Prophet: 1) Also called a street auger. An inconsequential chosen caster of a non-authorized power (such as Enki, or the Hebrew God). 2) A particularly annoying or loud critic of the Neo Babylonian establishment, preaching a populist message.

The Seven Lines of Kingu, The Seven Lines, The Lines of Kingu: 1) The seven major sapient beings on the planet whose cultures and civilizations are widespread and continue to grow. The Baru faith teaches that these seven were created by the powers from the blood of the primordial Kingu and the clay of the earth. They are Dwarves, Elves, Goblins, Humans, Orcs, and Yettin. The seventh line were Suhurmasu, who perished in the Shattering.

Tapu: 1) A very close or intimate relation. Best friend.

Tollie: 1) A mildly derogatory name for ogres. It is unclear whether this originally referred to how tall ogres were, or their penchant for living under bridges in prior times.

Trasher: 1) Derogatory name for goblins as a nod to their tendency to find value in things others discard.

Ukkim: 1) The council of 60 that rule Neo Babylon. The Ukkim represents the 12 founding populations of Neo Babylon, local interests, and is devoted to maintaining arcanism while attempting to appear benevolent and just.

Umbra: 1) Street Drug. Perception of color fades and the contrast between light and dark lessens. Emotions cease to have impact.

Unders: 1) The Undercity of Neo Babylon.

Uppers: 1) Neo Babylon, particularly the Overcity, also called Nice Babylon, Babel.

Winger: 1) Slang for Harmaku

Woll: 1) "Waste of long life." Derogatory name for elves. Most often used by humans.

Yojin: 1) Any of the various practitioners of official yojin arts. These sublime casters marry martial training, monastic practice, and channel the essence of air, earth, fire, water, or void to become one with their element. 2) Often used by the unaware to refer to any sublime caster of magic.

COMMUNITY NAME	TYPE	POWER	CASTE

MAGIC · TECHNOLOGY REBELLION
SUBVERSION

CORE INFORMATION

VALUES	IMPULSE	IMPULSE
1.		
2.		
3.		

FACTIONS AND RELATIONS

NAME	POWER	DEFAULT REGARD	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECTS	DESCRIPTION

RESOURCES

NAME	DESCRIPTION	NOTES

LAWJACKS

POWER **REGARD** **LOCATION** **NOTES**

CURRENT REGARD	-10	-5	-1	5	10	15
	MARTIAL LAW	**AGGRESSIVE**	**SUSPICIOUS**	**NEUTRAL**	**PROTECTIVE**	**DEFERENTIAL**
	COMMUNITY RESOURCES UNAVAILABLE INCREASE POWER BY 4 INCREASE FINES FOR CRIMES BY 2	INCREASE POWER BY 2 INCREASE FINES FOR CRIMES BY 2	INCREASE POWER BY 1	NO EFFECT	REDUCE FINES BY 3 HOSTILE FACTIONS HAVE -1 POWER	REDUCE FINES BY 5 HOSTILE FACTIONS HAVE -2 POWER LAWJACKS PROVIDE +1D6 AND AUGMENT 3 ON OBSERVATION CHECKS

CURRENT POWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	IGNORE ALL FINES LESS THAN 5 FORTUNE		IGNORE ALL FINES LESS THAN 3 FORTUNE				GEAR WITH ILLICIT GAINS +1 ILLICIT CONCEALMENT TRACKS AGAINST LAWJACKS DECREASED BY 3		GEAR WITH ILLICIT GAINS +2 ILLICIT CONCEALMENT TRACKS AGAINST LAWJACKS DECREASED BY 6	
	TOKEN PRESENCE		**LIGHT PRESENCE**		**NORMAL PRESENCE**		**HIGH SECURITY**		**FULL RESPONSE**	

MAGIC • TECHNOLOGY • REBELLION

SUBVERSION

NAME

PRONOUNS

LINEAGE

ORIGIN

BACKGROUND

FORTUNE CURRENT / TOTAL

CASTE

DEBT

AGILITY

WIT

AWARENESS

BRAWN

CHARISMA

WILL

VALUES

IDEOLOGY

VALUE

VALUE

VALUE

DEFENSE

GUARD

VIGILANCE

AEGIS

INITIATIVE

ARMOR

ADAMANT

CONDITION

HEALTH CURRENT / MAX

ANIMITY CURRENT / MAX

GRIT CURRENT / MAX

CONSEQUENCES

+1 INSTANCE OF DULLED EACH

IMPULSES

NAME

TRIGGERS

(PC may indulge an impulse to gain 3 Grit OR GM may spend 3 Grit to force an impulse)

DOWNTIME

SKILLS

		RANK	ATTRIBUTE	MISC. MODIFIER	ROLL (DULLED) (RELIABLE)
ARTS	(CHA)				D R
DECEPTION	(CHA)				D R
HUMANITES	(WIT)				D R
INFLUENCE	(CHA)				D R
MAGIC ARTS	(WIL)				D R
MELEE COMBAT	(AGI)				D R
OBSERVATION	(AWA)				D R
PHYSICALITY	(AGI/BRW)				D R
PILOTING	(AWA)				D R
RANGED COMBAT	(AGI)				D R
SCIENCE	(WIT)				D R
TECH	(WIT)				D R

ABILITIES

ABILITY	PG. REF.	EFFECT

SOCIAL

LANGAGUES

DRAMATIC HOOKS

COMMUNITY, RELATIONS, & FACTIONS

NAME	PRIMARY SKILL	ARCHETYPE/ASPECT	POWER	REGARD	NOTES

GEAR

GEAR	PG. REF	DESCRIPTION

MAGIC · TECHNOLOGY · REBELLION

SUBVERSION

GAME MODERATOR SHEET

GM GRIT

SPENDING GM GRIT

- Spend 3 Grit to add a complication to a successful roll (but not a dynamic or critical success).
  Sample complications:
  - A progress track (e.g. Regard or Concealment) increase by three
  - The character takes 2 damage
  - The character takes a -2 on their next roll.
- Spend 3 grit to invoke a characters impulse (pg 26 or value (pg 28)
- Spend 5 grit to upgrade a PCs failure to a dynamic failure
- Spend 12 grit to invoke a communities impulses (pg 79)
- Spend 20 grit to trigger a community catastrophe

The GM gains grit in the following way:
- The GM gains 3 grit when a player regains grit with an impulse in downtime
- The GM gains 5 grit at the end of each downtime.

Players may reduce the GM grit pool in the following way:
- Taking the reduce GM grit downtime action"

VALUES
1.
2.
3.

MISSION AND GOALS	
PRIMARY GOAL	
DOWNTIME GOAL	
DOWNTIME GOAL	
DOWNTIME GOAL	

PROGRESS

CASTE

IMPULSES

NPCs

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

NAME		VALUES		IMPULSES	
DETAILS		GOAL		HOOKS	

FACTIONS

NAME		ARCHETYPE		RESOURCES	ALLIES	ENEMIES
INFLUENCE		HOME TURF				
REGARD		NPCs				

NAME		ARCHETYPE		RESOURCES	ALLIES	ENEMIES
INFLUENCE		HOME TURF				
REGARD		NPCs				

NAME		ARCHETYPE		RESOURCES	ALLIES	ENEMIES
INFLUENCE		HOME TURF				
REGARD		NPCs				

AUTHORITIES

NAME	ARCHETYPE	RESOURCES	ALLIES	ENEMIES
INFLUENCE	HOME TURF			
HEAT	NPCs			

NOTES

NAME	ARCHETYPE	RESOURCES	ALLIES	ENEMIES
INFLUENCE	HOME TURF			
HEAT	NPCs			

NOTES

PLOTS

#1	#2	#3	#4
RUMOR	RUMOR	RUMOR	RUMOR
RISK	RISK	RISK	RISK
RUIN	RUIN	RUIN	RUIN

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